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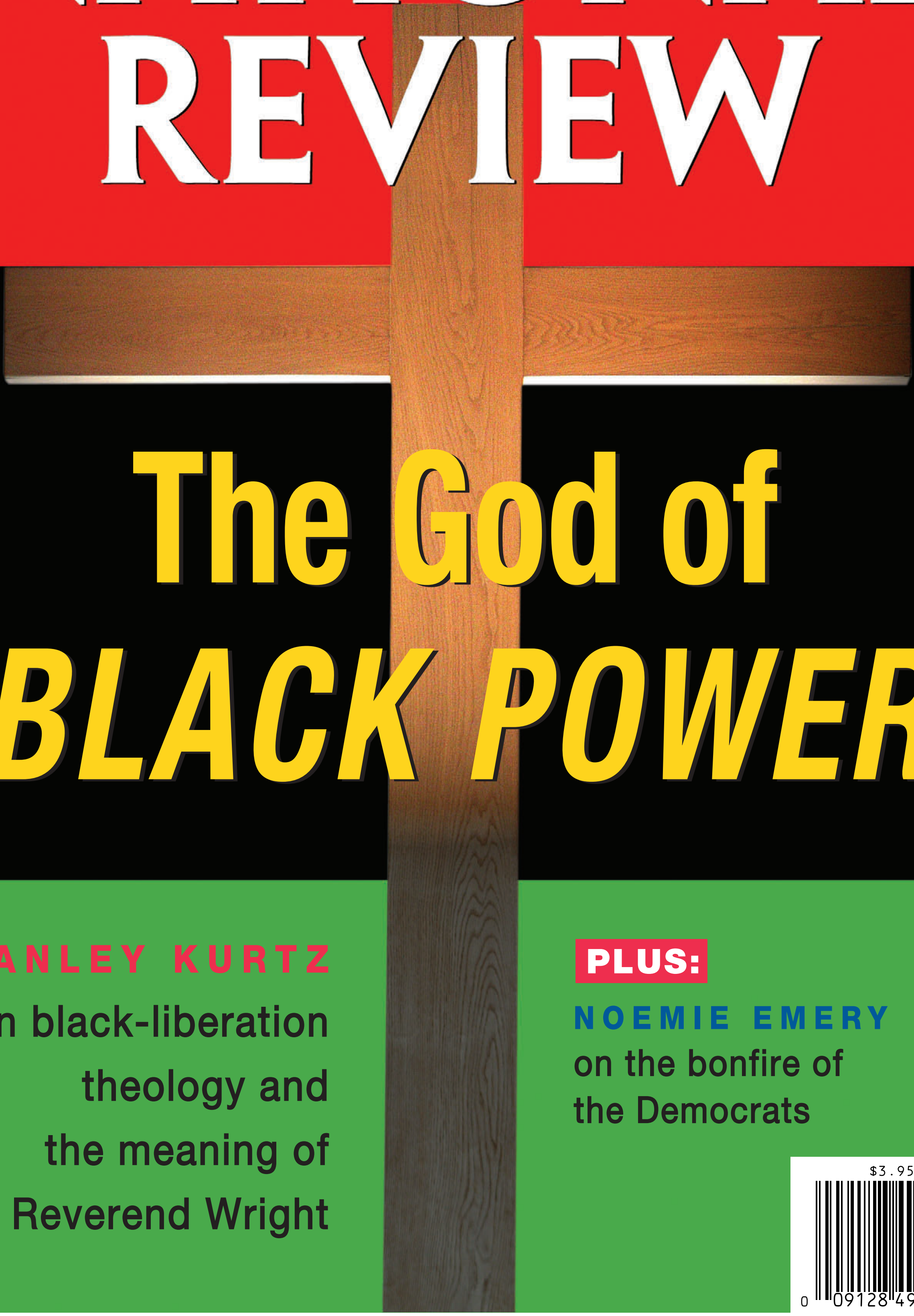
NATIONAL REVIEW



The God of *BLACK POWER*

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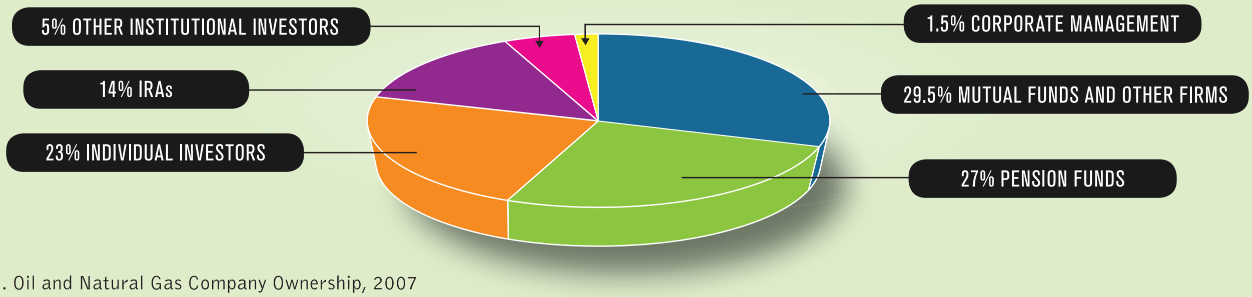

U.S. Oil and Natural Gas Company Ownership, 2007

Do you own an oil company?

Tens of millions of Americans own a piece of the U.S. oil and natural gas industry

If you've ever wondered who owns America's oil and natural gas companies, chances are the answer is, "you do."

Surprised?

The fact is that if you have a mutual fund account – and 55 million American households, with a median income of under $70,000, do – there's a good chance it invests in oil and natural gas company stocks. If you have an IRA or personal retirement account – and 45 million U.S. households do – there is a good chance it invests in energy stocks.

All this comes from a recent study* of U.S. oil and natural gas company ownership headed by Robert J. Shapiro, undersecretary of commerce for economic affairs under President Bill Clinton.

According to the study, the majority of the industry's shareholders are "middle-class U.S. households with mutual fund investments, pension accounts, other personal retirement accounts, and small personal portfolios."

What many may find particularly surprising is that our industry's corporate management owns only a tiny fraction of company shares.

Specifically, here is what the study found:

- 29.5 percent of U.S. oil and natural gas company shares are owned by mutual funds and other firms
- 27 percent are owned by pension funds
- Individual investors own 23 percent
- 14 percent are held in IRA accounts
- 5 percent are owned by other institutional investors
- 1.5 percent are held by corporate management (significantly less in the largest companies)

These findings tell us something very important: tens of millions of Americans have a stake in the U.S. oil and natural gas industry. When the industry's earnings are strong, the real winners are middle-class Americans, people investing in their retirement security or saving for their children's college education.

So when the political rhetoric gets hot about increasing energy taxes or taking "excess profits" from U.S. oil companies, it is important to step back, look at the facts, and ask yourself, "who does that really hurt?"

To read the full study, visit EnergyTomorrow.org.

THE *people* OF AMERICA'S
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*SONECON: *The Distribution of Ownership of U.S. Oil and Natural Gas Companies*, September 2007

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NATIONAL REVIEW

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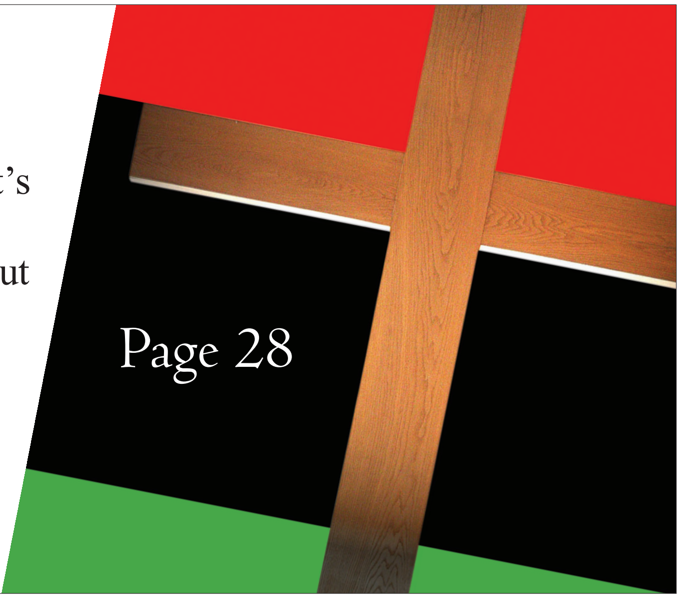
COVER STORY

‘Context,’ You Say?

The full story of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright’s theology and church adds considerable urgency to already-pressing questions about Barack Obama’s judgment in choosing this man as his mentor and pastor. Trinity United is arguably the most radical black church in the country. Wright’s theology, meanwhile, is stuck in a late-Sixties time warp. *By Stanley Kurtz*



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letters to the editor

SUB-PRIME HISTORY

In analyzing the sub-prime mortgage crisis, Robert VerBruggen starts with 1977's Community Reinvestment Act ("Straw Predators," May 5). He could usefully have gone back another decade, to 1968's Housing and Urban Development Act. This act extended Federal Housing Authority insurance to home-mortgage loans given to low-income, inner-city borrowers. The terms were extraordinary: minimal down payments, often 40 years to pay, 1 percent interest.

These sub-prime borrowers were, however, largely unprepared for home ownership. In 1973, disconsolate HUD secretary George Romney told the National Housing Conference: "This program was so uncautiously developed that we estimate that the federal government will in the next three years have more than 240,000 units in default—and with little resale value except at catastrophic levels of loss."

Fast-forward to today's "bailout" talk, and there's only one difference: Rather than backing loans that might go bad, Uncle Sam is considering getting behind loans it already knows are bad.

John McClaughry
Kirby, Vt.

UNSAFE AT LEGAL WEIGHT

Fred Schwarz is right to predict that science will achieve regulatory goals at its own pace ("Machina ex Machina," May 5).

He also says that "[current] CAFE standards are quite feasible, and while opponents have criticized them severely on economic grounds, at least no engineering miracles will be required." True—but the biggest problem with the Corporate Average Fuel Economy system concerns safety, not economics or engineering. By historical precedent, the easiest way for automakers to meet higher fuel-efficiency requirements is to make cars and trucks smaller and lighter, and thus less safe. A 2002 study by the National Academy of Sciences estimated that between 1,300 and 2,600 accident-related deaths each year can be attributed to CAFE standards.

David W. Almasi
Washington, D.C.

TELESCOPE OF A CONSERVATIVE, CONTINUED

In a recent letter to the editor, Robert Howe wrote with understandable pride of his possession of a Questar telescope previously owned by Barry Goldwater ("Telescope of a Conservative," May 5). A Questar indeed is an American-made jewel (colloquially known as the "doctor's telescope" for its precision and high cost), but it is not American-designed, as Mr. Howe says—or at least not entirely so. Its basic optical system is the early-1940s invention of a Russian designer, Dmitri Maksutov.

The Maksutov design could be called an American "might have been": After the 1917 Revolution, Dmitri, a young member of the Russian nobility, sought to flee to the United States, but failed.

John Kelley
San Antonio, Texas

NATIONAL REVIEW encourages letters to the editor. Letters can be submitted by e-mail to letters@nationalreview.com. Please include your full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters will be edited for space and clarity.

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Patients

My name is Setareh. I'm an AstraZeneca employee but I'm also the mother of a five-year-old son with asthma. I'm proud to work for a company committed to developing medicines that improve the lives of millions of patients worldwide – and thankful that includes my son.

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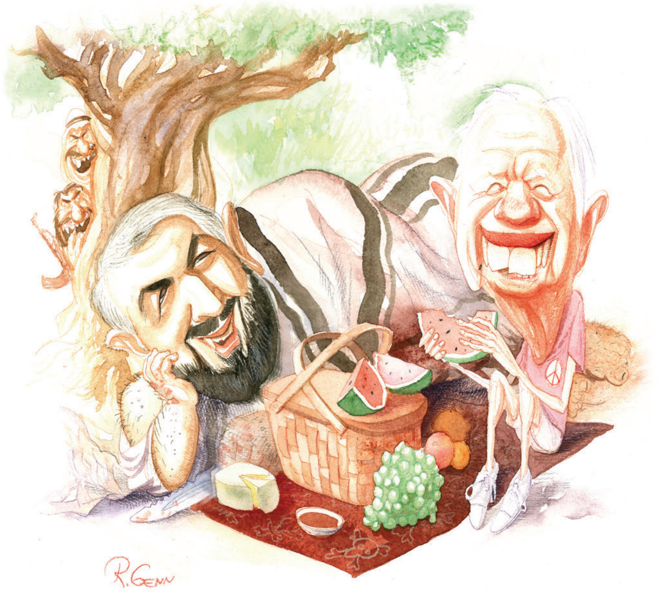
THE WEEK

■ Well, he's no longer clinging to *his* pastor.

■ Hillary Clinton is joining in for a chorus of "Bomb, Bomb Iran." In the event of an attack on Israel, Clinton says, "I want the Iranians to know that if I'm the president, we will attack Iran. In the next ten years, during which they might foolishly consider launching an attack on Israel, we would be able to totally obliterate them." In other words, Iranians should watch out for some sniper fire.

■ It's now a vast two-winged conspiracy: An exposé of Hillary Rodham Clinton's extremist roots has appeared not in National Review but in *The Nation*. Tom Hayden, who as one of the Chicago Seven knows a little something about fringe radicalism, summarizes: "She was in Chicago for three nights during the 1968 street confrontations. . . . She was involved in the New Haven defense of [Black Panther] Bobby Seale during his murder trial in 1970, as the lead scheduler of student monitors. . . . Most significantly in terms of her recent attacks on Barack, after Yale law school, Hillary went to work for the left-wing Bay Area law firm of Treuhaft, Walker and Burnstein, which specialized in defending Black Panthers and West Coast labor leaders prosecuted for being communists. Two of the firm's partners, according to Treuhaft, were communists and the two others 'tolerated communists.'" Robert Treuhaft, it should be noted, was no mere lefty sympathizer, but a dues-paying member of the Communist Party USA, which reported to Stalin. Between Senator Obama's racist pastor, his bomb-planting buddy Bill Ayers, and the network of terrorists who were the beneficiaries of Clinton pardons—FALN bombers, cop-killing Weathermen &c.—the two Democrats offer a sanguinary account of what was and is wrong with the Left in America. Voters should remember where Senator McCain was while Clinton and the rest of the tea-party radicals were courting Communists at Yale.

■ On the eve of the Pennsylvania primary, the author and screenwriter Nora Ephron wrote in the Huffington Post: "This is an election about whether the people of Pennsylvania hate blacks more than they hate women. And when I say people, I don't mean people, I mean white men." So white men are damned either way: This brings to mind the old joke, which was no doubt familiar to Ephron's first husband (Dan Greenburg, author of *How to Be a Jewish Mother*), about the woman who gave her son two ties and, when he wore one of them, asked, "You didn't like the other tie?" Ephron goes on to say that the outcome of the general election will depend on how many members of her least favorite demographic group vote for McCain, and unfortunately "a lot of them will; white men cannot be relied on, as all of us know who have spent a lifetime dating them." While there's no accounting for Ephron's unsatisfactory love life, her words reflect an attitude all too common among Democrats. If they want to win in November, they'll have to do better than calling a big chunk of the electorate bitter, prejudiced, and unreliable.



Terrorist? Who you callin' a terrorist? (See page 8.)

ROMAN GENN

■ John McCain visited New Orleans on what was billed as a tour of "forgotten places"—places forgotten by America, and by the GOP. He trashed the response to Hurricane Katrina, which he called "a perfect storm" of "federal, state, and local governments' inability. . . . I would've landed my airplane at the nearest Air Force base and come over personally." What to make of all this? With a few exceptions—the Coast Guard, Mississippi governor Haley Barbour—government failed at every level before, as, and after Katrina hit, and McCain was right to include the feds in his indictment. Would he have done better? His pledge to fly to disasters himself reflects his take-charge manner and his ego. Sometimes the presence of Numero Uno inspires; sometimes it adds to the chaos. Expect both from a McCain administration.

■ North Carolina Republicans ran an ad zinging Obama for his association with Jeremiah Wright. There are enough degrees of separation here to question the ad's implicit argument. But that wasn't enough for liberaldom (which decided that any raising of the Wright issue was racist) or for John McCain (who floridly denounced the ad as beneath his stan-

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dards). Later, noting that Obama himself had conceded that people had legitimate concerns about Wright, McCain backed off. At press time, his convictions require him not to raise the issue himself, but also not to denounce those who do. McCain has to avoid two traps here. First: Many Democrats are going to try to rule any criticism of Obama off-limits as racist. Stopping that tactic will require both restraint (not making criticisms that could easily be twisted) and assertiveness (challenging any twisting). Second: McCain will want to demonstrate that he is unlike other Republicans, but without dampening those Republicans' enthusiasm for him. His handling of this North Carolina ad is a discouraging sign that he may not be able to navigate these waters.

■ John McCain has proposed suspending the federal gas tax for the summer. Drivers will no doubt appreciate the sentiment, but his proposal is unlikely to help them. Suspending the tax, to the extent it lowers prices, will drive up demand, but oil supplies will not have enough time to rise as well—so the cost of gas will return to approximately where it began. Walking in circles is not a smart energy policy.

■ If personnel is policy, President Bush couldn't have done better than the new jobs he has given Gens. David Petraeus and Ray Odierno. Petraeus will be the next head of CENTCOM, with responsibility for the entire Middle East, and Odierno, who has been Petraeus's second-in-command, will take over in Iraq. The nation's foremost counterinsurgent, Petraeus is ideally suited to oversee the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Odierno, meanwhile, has been almost as central to the successes of the surge in Iraq as Petraeus. Both men are committed to prevailing in Iraq and will ensure that the new president gets an unvarnished assessment of the risks of a rapid withdrawal. Well done.

■ Gun-rights supporters are eagerly awaiting the Supreme Court's upcoming decision in *D.C.* v. *Heller*. The justices are likely to declare the Second Amendment an individual right, and could very well strike down the handgun ban in the nation's capital. But until then, fans of firearms would do well to read "Much Ado About . . . Something Else," a paper from the University of Colorado Law School's Maxine Burkett. The professor takes a close look at how racial politics have intertwined with the Second Amendment fight over the years. It has been well documented that Southern states often used gun control to disarm blacks, and Condoleezza Rice has commented on the role guns played in the civil-rights struggle, but never before has a single source pulled together so much information on the subject. The lesson we draw is that the right to own guns is itself an important civil right.

■ When it agreed last September to take up *Baze* v. *Rees*, a challenge to the constitutionality of lethal injection, the Supreme Court effectively imposed a national moratorium on the death penalty. On April 16, the justices rendered their verdict: Lethal injection is neither cruel nor unusual. It may in fact be the most humane method of execution available. Its relative gentleness is precisely why it has supplanted both the electric chair and the gas chamber as a way of dealing death. Chief Justice John Roberts got to the heart of the matter in his majority opinion. "Capital punishment is constitutional," he wrote. "It necessarily follows that there must be a means of carrying it out." The crusade against lethal injection was ultimately a mischievous attempt to throw a monkey wrench into the legal mechanics of capital punishment. Most advocates of the lawsuit simply wanted the death penalty to grind to a halt, by any means necessary. Reasonable people may differ on the merits and morality of capital punishment. The proper arena for their disputes, however, is not the Supreme Court, but the voting booth and state legislatures.

■ Staff Sgt. Ronald C. Blystone, of the 4th Infantry Division, died patrolling Baghdad on his third tour in Iraq. Blystone, of Springfield, Mo., had won a Bronze Star. He leaves a wife and three children. He appeared in full gear on the May 9, 2005 cover of NATIONAL REVIEW, illustrating the story "We're Winning," by Richard Lowry. Slowly, and with heartache. But thanks to Blystone and his comrades, we are. They fill our enemies with dread, and us with pride and bottomless gratitude.

SPRING BOOKS ISSUE
May 9, 2005 49145 $3.95 U.S., $4.95 Canadian
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NATIONAL REVIEW
We're Winning
HOW THE U.S. LEARNED THE ART OF COUNTERINSURGENCY IN IRAQ
by Richard Lowry

■ President Bush's North Korea policy is in disarray. The State Department's seeming goal is to implement our part of the six-party agreement, in which Kim Jong Il promised to give up his nuclear program in exchange for economic aid, no matter what reasons Kim gives us to think he is lying. And we have a new reason, in the form of a videotape shown to members of the House Intelligence Committee. According to those familiar with the tape, it demonstrates that a Syrian nuclear facility bombed by Israel last September was built with North Korean help, and was nearly identical in design and function to Kim's reactor at Yongbyon. Work on the Syrian reactor appears to have taken place over the last five years, right up until the Israeli strike, which took place after the six-party agreement. Bush should scrap the agreement and work toward rebuilding the Security Council consensus to sanction Kim for his dangerous lies.

■ Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri does the propaganda nowadays for al-Qaeda, and he has found the modern way to keep alive his movement's fantasy of global supremacy. (And yes, this killer is a doctor of medicine.) Last December, he put out a video inviting web users around the world to send in questions, which he promised to answer. The logistics cannot be easy in the rugged and undeveloped tribal areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan, given the general absence there of electricity, never mind cyberspace. Four months later, he has

Are Democrats Less Patriotic Than Republicans?

OVER THE COURSE of a generation, the far right in America has peddled a story that says conservatives love their country more than liberals. That's patently false. But it's worth asking: What *is* true patriotism?

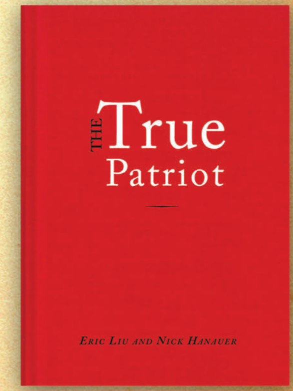
IS IT PATRIOTIC—or even conservative—to support an aggressive expansion of government power to eavesdrop?

IS IT PATRIOTIC—or even conservative—to support tax and fiscal policies that let the wealthiest off the hook, put more burdens on the middle class, and create a massive debt and deficit for the next generation to clean up?

IS IT PATRIOTIC—or even conservative—to throw America's great military into wars and nation-building adventures that have flimsy justification and no definable end?

IS IT PATRIOTIC—or even conservative—to despoil, for short-term profit, America's natural resources and rob our children of their rightful bounty?

We're Democrats, and we've written a little book about the moral code of patriotism. We believe that true patriotism belongs to neither party—but that there are false patriots in both. We believe that true patriotism means progress, pragmatism, and country above self. And we think there are conservatives who would agree. What do *you* believe?



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posted his responses in an audiotape for the web. He upbraids Muslims for failing to support al-Qaeda, urging them “not to withhold men and money, which is the mainstay of a war.” If any “innocent Muslims” have been killed by al-Qaeda, he goes on, it was either an unintentional error “or out of necessity.” This preposterous rationalization, the despondent call for recruits and funds, the whole tone, suggest that al-Qaeda is ailing, and the doctor knows it.

■ So Jimmy Carter had his meeting with Hamas in Syria. With what result? In a speech to Hamas supporters in Gaza, Mushir Masri, a Hamas official, said the Carter meeting confirmed “the failure of the U.S. and European policies of ignoring Hamas. . . . All the countries that assume Hamas is a terrorist group should reconsider.” Mr. Masri, Mr. Carter: Wouldn’t that happen faster if Hamas reconsidered terrorism?

■ Clare Short, of Britain’s Labour party, is a longtime member of Parliament. She is also a longtime leftist—but she is by no means on the lunatic fringe. There’s her membership in Parliament, of course—and the fact that she served in Tony Blair’s cabinet, for six years. She resigned after the start of the Iraq War. Recently, she appeared on al-Jazeera, speaking to what must have been a very large Arab audience. And what did she say? That Blair and George Bush would one day be tried in the International Criminal Court. “There are brave lawyers who are waiting for this opportunity, which will come one day.” In her Jazeera appearance, she was speaking to people many of whom are ruled by tyrannical men. Any lawyers waiting for the opportunity to try *them* really are brave.

■ In Italy, Silvio Berlusconi became prime minister for the third time. His center-Right party scored a big electoral triumph over all rivals—including the extreme Left and the extreme Right. Surveying the new landscape in his country, Berlusconi said, “I am the happiest man in all of Italy.” We’re pretty happy ourselves. With Merkel in Germany, Sarkozy in

States of Recession

WHEN the economy enters recession, some regions are hit harder than others. Two things about the current episode merit especially close attention: the narrow geographic focus of the hardest times, and the uneven political distribution of the downturn.

The nearby map illustrates current economic conditions and traditional voting preferences on a state-by-state basis. Each state’s color represents its partisan leaning. “Red” states tend to vote Republican. “Blue” states trend toward Democrats. “Purple” states are expected to be highly competitive in the 2008 election. I determined expected voting patterns by examining a number of different factors, including recent election results, current polling trends, and a recent paper by my American Enterprise Institute colleagues John Fortier and Tim Ryan titled “Swing States and Electoral College Strategy.”

Overlaid on the states’ colors are patterns that indicate whether the state is in an expansion, in a recession, or “at risk for recession,” according to a recent article by Steve Cochrane of Economy.com. Large black dots represent states with expanding economies. Small black dots show contracting economies. States with horizontal lines are “at risk.”

Texas, for example, is a Republican-leaning state with an expanding economy, so it is colored red with large dots. Michigan, being a swing state in recession, is purple with small dots.

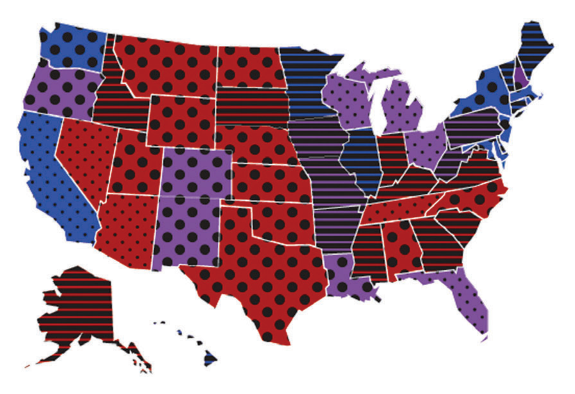
The map illustrates the extent to which real-estate markets have led the downturn. California, Florida, and Nevada were among the worst real-estate markets: Home prices in all three states dropped by more than 4.5 percent over the past year, according to the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight. Major cities in these states have been hit even harder, as Los Angeles, San Diego, Miami, and Las Vegas all experienced home-price declines of between 15 and 20 percent between January 2007 and January 2008, according to the S&P/Case-Shiller Home Price Indices. Plummeting prices have discouraged building activity, which in turn has led to massive layoffs.

But elsewhere, the picture is a bit rosier, with fully 20 states continuing to expand.

To the extent that dark economic times motivate voters to seek “change” or perhaps even “change you can believe in,” the chart also provides ample food for thought for political analysts. Among the nine states that are currently in recession, Florida, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin are key swing states in the November election. Among the red states, 12 of 22 are at risk of recession or in recession. The blue states are not faring any better, with 9 of 14 either at risk or in recession.

Thus, as Republicans enter the fall campaign, they can collectively add a significant economic disadvantage to their list of handicaps. It is likely not only that the economy as a whole will be in recession, but that the swing states will be sharing the misery.

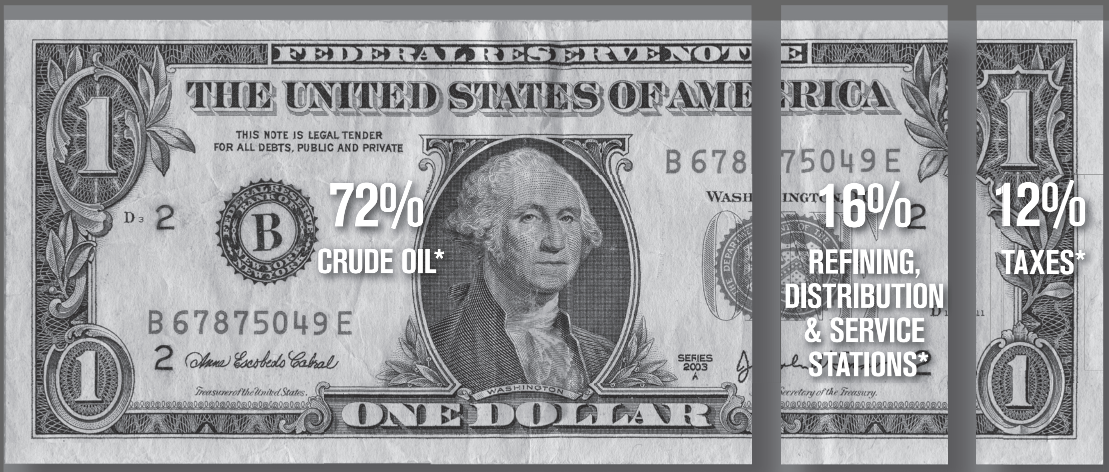
—KEVIN A. HASSETT



SOURCES: ECONOMY.COM; JOHN FORTIER AND TIM RYAN, “SWING STATES AND ELECTORAL COLLEGE STRATEGY”; AUTHOR’S CALCULATIONS

[The price at the pump]

Where does your gasoline dollar go?



In 2007, the industry earned 8.3 cents on each dollar of sales.**

* U.S. Department of Energy data for March 2008
** API calculation based on the *Oil Daily*

According to the Federal Trade Commission, the global price of crude oil is the single most important factor in what you pay for fuel at the pump. Since 1992, America's oil and natural gas industry has invested $1.25 trillion in exploration, development, production and distribution of oil and natural gas.

To learn more about fuel prices, what the oil and natural gas industry is doing and what you can do, visit EnergyTomorrow.org.

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France, and now Silvio back in Italy, "Old Europe" is getting a new look.

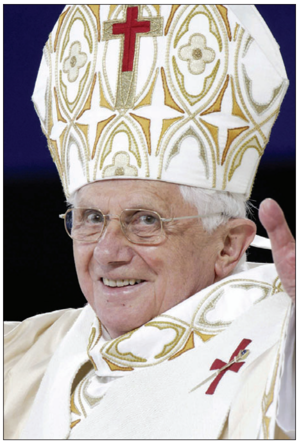
■ For Che Guevara, the lovin' never stops. He must be the most adored totalitarian thug/murderer in the world. The 80th anniversary of his birth is upon us, and Andres Zerneri, a sculptor in Guevara's native Argentina, is doing something about it. He has asked people worldwide to contribute "bronze keys, kitchenware, and old instruments for a statue" commemorating Guevara. (We quote from a Bloomberg report.) So far, some 15,000 people have contributed more than three tons of this material. About those "old instruments," we wonder: Do they include instruments of torture?

■ If in recent weeks the entire male population of Congo have looked like soccer players defending a free kick, the reason lies in widespread rumors of penis snatchers: sorcerers who, with a single touch, can shrink said appendage or make it non-functional in its most rewarding application. While witches (of various sorts) who have this effect can be found everywhere, such miscreants are regrettably common in West Africa; a decade ago, a dozen suspected penis snatchers were beaten to death by an angry mob of Ghanaians, and you can hardly blame them. In Congo, fearful citizens called the police, who soon had 13 alleged ED inducers in protective custody. As one reporter explains, "The threat of being left without a manhood is not taken lightly in West Africa." This is one case where very little effort is required to build cross-cultural understanding.

■ The case of Robert Mugabe, 84 years old and still monstrously eager to wreck Zimbabwe, illuminates the dilemma of many a dictator. Is it enough to steal an election through trickery and measured violence, or is it better to shoot outright as much of the ungrateful population as may be necessary? The stealing did not quite work out for Mugabe, so he turned to China for help in preparing for the shooting. This was one dictatorship to another. China supports whoever in Africa is able to provide the raw materials it needs, in Zimbabwe as in Sudan and elsewhere. A Chinese freighter duly docked in the South African port of Durban with 3 million rounds of ammunition, 1,500 rocket-propelled grenades, and thousands of mortar rounds. This cargo had to transit through Durban since Zimbabwe is landlocked. South Africa's president, Thabo Mbeki, was evidently and shamefully willing to be complicit in Mugabe's looming massacre. But South African dockworkers saved the day when they refused to unload the arms. The Chinese government tried to sound aggrieved that it couldn't carry out what it described as "normal trade in military products," but, perhaps influenced by the international outcry about its ongoing repression in Tibet, finally ordered the death ship home. Trickery and measured violence continue to be Mugabe's option for the time being.

SIPA

■ Since taking over Cuba from his infirm brother Fidel, Raúl Castro has swept away many of the old regime's restrictions. Cubans may now rent mobile phones and own computers, DVDs, microwave ovens, and—perhaps the greatest concession of all—cars made after 1959. Soon, it is reported, they will even be able to leave the country without an exit permit. It is a sign of how comprehensively fouled up Cuba is that when Raúl "gave" Cubans a few of the rights enjoyed by any free people, the predominant reaction was: What's his game? That remains unclear; he may be angling for America to lift its embargo, or he may just hope to draw more money into the country in difficult times. Whatever his motivation, the changes are welcome. Free speech, democracy, and unfettered private enterprise may be too much to hope for anytime soon, but an authoritarian Cuba would be better than a totalitarian one, and a China of the Caribbean—presumably minus China's militarism and imperial ambitions—would be less of an outrage than the Stalinist prison that Cuba has been.



■ Pope Benedict XVI concluded his trip to these shores by meeting with five victims of priestly sexual abuse and addressing the United Nations. In the first meeting, the pope faced up to the grave sins committed both by the abusive priests and by the bishops who protected them. Refreshingly, he used the language of repentance rather than of therapy or legalism. The meeting was a necessary step toward the renewal of the church. The U.N. needs renewal as well, and the pope performed a useful service in reminding it that its legitimate role is to serve the rights and dignity of persons—and not, for instance, to serve its tyrannical member states. We would have preferred a bit more emphasis on subsidiarity: the notion that authority should be exercised by the smallest unit sufficient to the task. A careless listener, or one who wanted to hear a rationale for U.N. empire-building, might have come away with the impression that the pope was calling for a vastly enlarged international organization to vindicate human rights. We suspect the pope would be pleased if the U.N. performed its current tasks without the many types of corruption to which it has been prone.

■ The trial of three detectives responsible for the death of Sean Bell, a young black man killed during a confusing run-in outside a Queens strip club after his bachelor party, ended with the acquittal of all three. "New Yorkers will not take this abortion of justice lying down," said Al Sharpton. Yet justice was done. The contradictory and confusing testimony of numerous prosecution witnesses, many of them friends of Bell, made it impossible to establish guilt beyond a reasonable doubt for the array of charges, from manslaughter to reckless endangerment. This does not mean that the detectives were competent or capable, that they will escape civil

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THE WEEK...

penalties, or that police procedures do not need improvement. One of the lessons of the Giuliani and Bloomberg mayoralties is that good policing is smart policing, and is always a work in progress. Law-abiding citizens in New York and nationwide deserve no less.

■ Lesley Stahl interviewed Justice Antonin Scalia for *60 Minutes*. (Scalia has just collaborated on a book advising lawyers on how to persuade judges.) Stahl, to her credit, let Scalia make the case for originalism, even if the segment treated Justice Ginsburg—brought in as a character witness—more kindly. Stahl did a fair impression of someone encountering the idea for the first time. A low point came when Scalia tried to explain to her that the use of torture in an interrogation cannot count as "cruel and unusual punishment" under the Eighth Amendment since it is not a punishment at all. He responded to folly with perseverance and good humor, which is to say that his interview resembled his tenure on the Court.

■ An anonymous report of sexual abuse set off a raid of a polygamous sect in Texas. What the authorities have uncovered should dispel any illusions about what tolerance of polygamy is likely to yield. More than half of the teenage girls on the compound have had children, very likely by older men. But it cannot be said that the state has handled this case well. More than 400 children, including toddlers, have been removed from their mothers, at least temporarily. Both the culture and the law should support monogamous marriage as the way of life most compatible with human flourishing and republican government. Allowing a polygamous community to grow undisturbed, and then assaulting it with the legal equivalent of tanks, does not strike us as a wise policy.

■ In Atlanta, a superior-court judge, Marvin Arrington, wanted to give black defendants a dressing-down—without the presence of white people. So he kicked them out of his courtroom (and later apologized for it). Bill Cosby subsequently contacted Judge Arrington, to say that he wanted to help him in what he was doing. The two of them, along with comedian Chris Tucker, addressed students at Atlanta's Benjamin Mays High School. Cosby spoke of the casualness with which people treat horrific problems affecting black Americans. He put it this way: "Well, the mother's on crack cocaine. Pass the salt. That girl's baby has no father. Pass the salt. Oh, he shot him in the head? Pass the salt. We look at failure, and we're like, 'Pass the salt.'" What about the charge that what Cosby does is air the "dirty laundry" of blacks? He said, "That's crazy. There are black people who have to walk around this dirty laundry." Nice going, Cos—and keep going.

■ Has Robert Downey Jr. joined playwright David Mamet in embracing the love that dare not speak its name—the love of liberty, order, and personal responsibility—you know, *conservatism*? Here's what the *Iron Man* star told the *New York Times*: "I have a really interesting political point of view, and it's not always something I say too loud at dinner tables here, but you can't go from a $2,000-a-night suite at La Mirage to a penitentiary and really understand it and come out a liberal." Perhaps his roles have also influenced him: His star turn in *Less Than Zero* was taken as an indictment of the 1980s, and he is now playing *Iron Man* hero Tony Stark, a talented capitalist who spent the Cold War combating Communists in the pages of Marvel Comics. Whatever his politics, we're happy to see Mr. Downey out of the pokey.

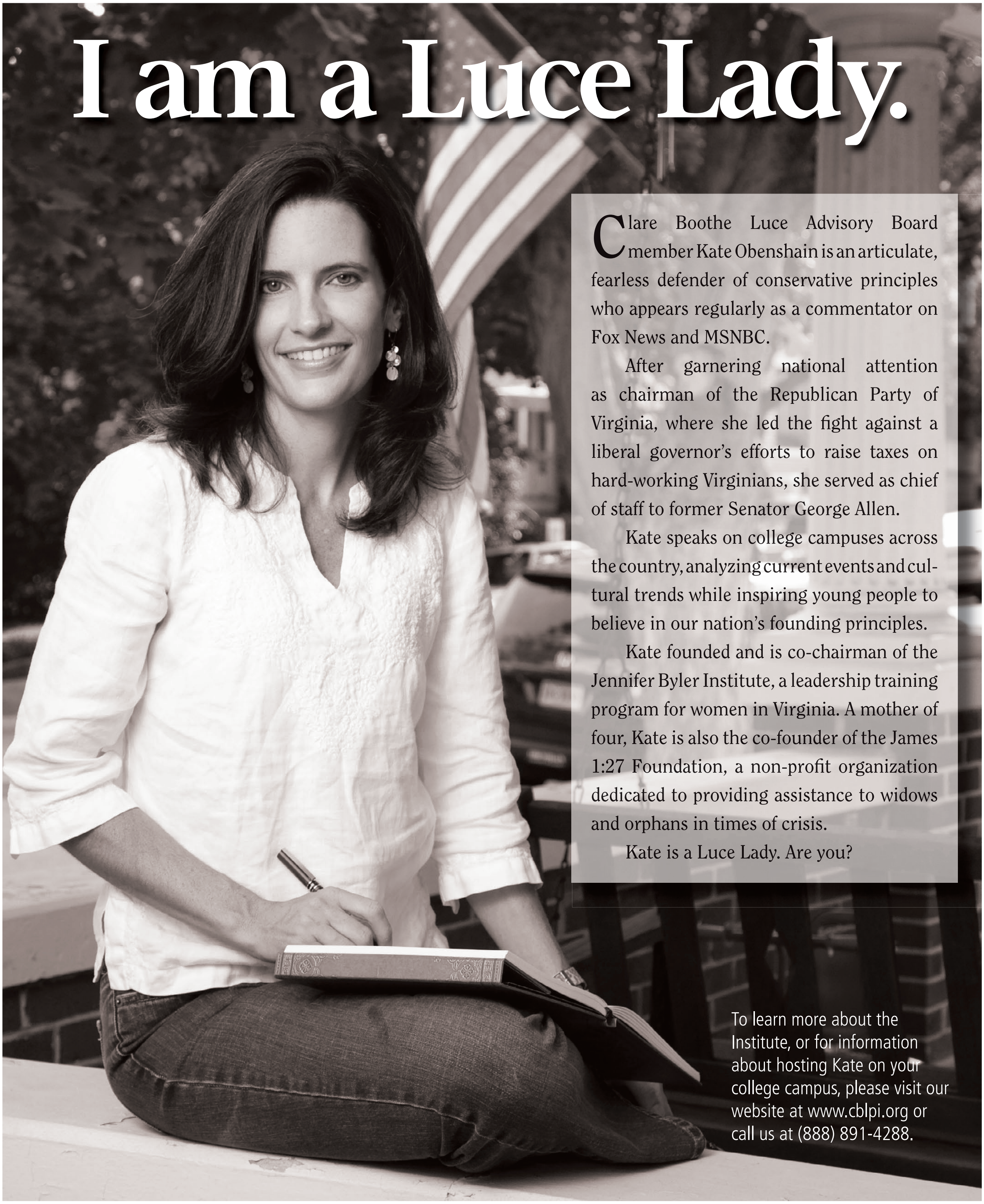
TIMOTHY A. CLARY/AFP

■ Miley Cyrus is a 15-year-old girl whose alter ego, Hannah Montana, "is" a rock star. It is reckoned that Miss Cyrus's movies and concerts will earn her $1 billion by the time she is 18, deep into the next election cycle—unless her squeaky-clean image is tarnished by a *Vanity Fair* photo spread in which celebrity photographer Annie Leibovitz shot her wearing only a bedsheet. Lesson Number One is, never be photographed by Annie Leibovitz, at any age (Leibovitz shot her dying lover Susan Sontag). Lesson Number Two is, don't rely on stage-struck parents for guidance; Miss Cyrus's father, country singer Billy Ray Cyrus, was with her during the shoot, and approved the pix—at least until the storm broke. Lesson Number Three is that the culture's absorption with young girls is a sickness. We say we like innocence, and some of us (Miss Cyrus's kid fans) do. But we also feast on the loss of innocence. Forgive us our trespasses.

■ If Barack Obama wants to understand the rural working class, he should get a pair of Truck Nutz. These are fake testicles, shrouded in appropriate fashion, that dangle from the trailer hitch of a truck. While the mere existence of such an accessory, let alone its purpose, may seem unfathomable in Volvoland, they are enormously popular among truckers—especially in the South, where they are prized as an emblem of "truckliness." Refusing to truckle, however, is Florida's state senate, which has just passed a bill to ban the orbicular ornaments. The reason is understandable: Get stuck behind a pair on the highway, and the novelty of watching them sway back and forth is sure to wear off after 50 miles or so. After passing an earlier bill banning low-hanging pants in Florida public schools, the senate has made a fine beginning in the herculean task of eliminating bad taste from the Sunshine State.

■ The incomparable Kate O'Beirne is changing jobs—but, fortunately, she will still be within shouting distance. Since 1995, she has been our Washington editor, casting her keen eye on Congress, the presidency, and more. Now she will be president of the National Review Institute—an organization dedicated to performing conservative good works. As she shone at NR, she'll shine at NRI. That is KO'B.

I am a Luce Lady.



Clare Boothe Luce Advisory Board member Kate Obenshain is an articulate, fearless defender of conservative principles who appears regularly as a commentator on Fox News and MSNBC.

After garnering national attention as chairman of the Republican Party of Virginia, where she led the fight against a liberal governor's efforts to raise taxes on hard-working Virginians, she served as chief of staff to former Senator George Allen.

Kate speaks on college campuses across the country, analyzing current events and cultural trends while inspiring young people to believe in our nation's founding principles.

Kate founded and is co-chairman of the Jennifer Byler Institute, a leadership training program for women in Virginia. A mother of four, Kate is also the co-founder of the James 1:27 Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing assistance to widows and orphans in times of crisis.

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2008

Not Weak Enough

Even after his nine-point drubbing in Pennsylvania, even after the Reverend Wright's speeches, Barack Obama is still likely to be the Democratic presidential nominee. The superdelegates will be hesitant to overturn his lead, however narrow, in the elected-delegate tally, knowing that this would call down the wrath of black voters, wealthy liberals, and journalists. They will not do it unless it is patently obvious that Hillary Clinton would be a stronger candidate in the fall. Right now there is a plausible argument on both sides of that question, which means she will probably lose.

Senator Obama has real weaknesses. McGovernite candidates have always had limited appeal to blacks in Democratic primaries and to white working-class voters in general elections. Obama has solved the first problem during this campaign but made the second worse. Both Obama and Clinton would lead a party that has moved far to the left since 2000, on everything from trade to health care to taxes to foreign policy, in some cases creating opportunities for Republicans to appeal to the public's sounder views.

Republicans are enjoying the Democratic fratricide at the moment and savoring the weaknesses of both contenders. They should not kid themselves: The Democrats still have an edge in the election. As the Democratic race has continued, both candidates have maintained slight leads over McCain in the polls.

We do not doubt McCain's ability to make a compelling national-security case for his candidacy. To win the election, however, he will also have to explain how a creative conservative domestic policy can help ordinary Americans, particularly in the lower middle class. If he does that, and benefits from some more luck, he just might make Democrats the bitter ones in November.

2008 II

The Hopeless Pastor

Barack Obama made what his admirers consider an epochal speech on race in Philadelphia this March. So Obama's longtime pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, who very much admires himself, decided to make his own epochal speech to the National Press Club in Washington.

Reverend Wright complained that the hostile media have chopped his thought up into sound bites, and then repeated all the bites. HIV may well be a government plot to slaughter black people ("I believe we are capable"). We had it coming on 9/11 ("You cannot do terrorism on other people and expect it never to come back on you"). Louis Farrakhan, the racist crackpot with a science-fiction religion, "is not my enemy." Farrakhan's view of Israel is "the same thing United Nations resolutions say, the same thing now that President Carter is being vilified for" (he got that one right). Like the Roman Empire in Jesus's day, "we run the world." The reverend's worldview is an intoxicated mix of despair and narcissism: White America is corrupt and all-powerful, and can only be shaken by an endless chorus of complaint, led by Afrocentric divines. There might be some Christianity mixed up in all this detritus, and someone might even find salvation in it. But such a disciple will have trouble persuading the electorate to make him president.

Jeremiah Wright is not going anywhere. He is a newly retired geezer with the national spotlight on him; these are his lifetime victory laps. Can his parishioner and spiritual son, Barack Obama, get away from him? Obama had the chance to cut the cord when Hurricane Wright first blew in March, but, while criticizing certain of Wright's views, he said he could no more disown him than he could disown his white grandmother. Wright is Obama's family, and more. Obama needed Wright when he was a young community organizer and nascent pol to give him street cred; he needed him, at a deeper level, to replace his deadbeat Kenyan father and his hippie-screwball white mother. Most people say, at one time or another, with gratitude or resignation, "You can't choose your parents." Obama chose this parent.

Most people say, at one time or another, with gratitude or resignation, 'You can't choose your parents.' Obama chose this parent.

Obama tried valiantly to squelch this latest eruption. "When he states and then amplifies such ridiculous propositions as the U.S. government somehow being involved in AIDS . . . there are no excuses." Wright's bleats "offend me. They rightly offend all Americans and they should be denounced." Politics sometimes requires those who play the game to betray their nearest and dearest, and themselves. Even the politics of hope.

THE ECONOMY

Hungry for Ethanol

The federal government can do something right now to provide relief to Americans facing higher food prices: repeal the ethanol mandate. The diversion of nearly one-third of the American corn crop into ethanol production is a direct result of a 2005 law that required gasoline makers to buy 7.5 billion gallons of ethanol. The energy bill that President Bush signed in December increases that mandatory purchase to 36 billion gallons by 2022.

We realize that a repeal is highly unlikely, given that the machinery of government is currently calibrated to move in the opposite direction. But as food prices keep going up, pro-ethanol politicians will find it increasingly difficult to justify their position. Food riots in developing countries are becoming more frequent. Sam's Club has started limiting bulk sales of rice. The Labor Department reports that the price of bread is up 14.7 percent from last year. Milk prices are up 13.3 percent.

The production of ethanol is not the only factor driving food prices up. Demand for food is growing in China and

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India as more people in those countries move into the middle class. Fuel prices are up, making it more expensive to cultivate food crops and transport them to market. A drought in Australia, a major wheat exporter, has sent bread prices soaring. Commodity speculation, exacerbated by the Fed's loose monetary policy, has played a role. So have trade restrictions on the export of rice from countries such as Vietnam and the Philippines, which have taken to hoarding from fear of worse times to come.

But demand for ethanol has also had an impact on food prices. It's simple economics: Farmers have planted a lot of new corn on acres where they once grew other food crops such as soybeans and wheat, and they are selling all of that new corn—and then some—to ethanol distilleries. That means there are fewer acres devoted to food crops, and there is less corn available for feeding livestock at a time when worldwide demand for meat and milk is rising. Lower supply plus greater demand equals higher prices.

The U.S. government can do little to make gasoline less expensive and nothing about the weather in Australia. The production of ethanol, on the other hand, is directly related to government policies that subsidize it and require its use in gasoline. Absent government intervention, there would be little demand for ethanol as fuel. It has a lower energy content than gasoline, is not significantly cheaper, and is more difficult to transport to points of sale.

Congress has created an artificial demand for ethanol to satisfy the farm lobby, which is one of the most powerful in Washington. Soaring food prices have sent farmers' incomes to record heights, yet Congress is preparing to lavish even more welfare on them by passing a new five-year, $280 billion farm bill. President Bush has threatened to veto the bill for exceeding his spending limits, and he would be right to do it.

We'd also like to see him follow the example of his successor in Austin. Texas governor Rick Perry, a Republican, has asked the Environmental Protection Agency to weaken the ethanol mandate for his state. Perry cited higher food prices for Texans, as well as injury to the state's cattlemen, who are paying much more for feed.

John McCain, too, should align himself with Perry. McCain has spoken out in the past against ethanol, but he took a lower profile on the issue as the Iowa caucuses approached. Well, the caucuses are over. Both Democratic candidates support a policy that is contributing to higher food prices for Americans. McCain should make clear that he opposes it.

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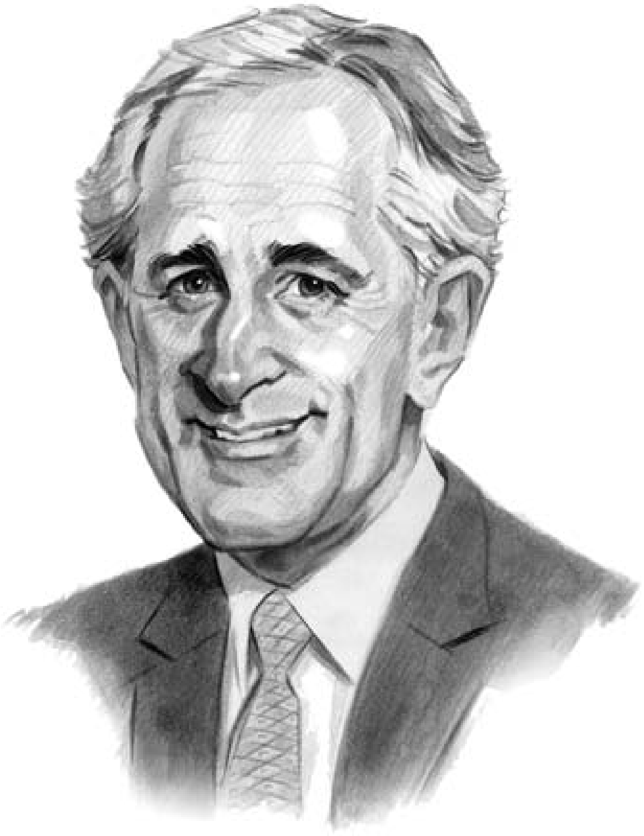

■ CONGRESS ■

Senator Empirical

Bob Corker takes on climate change

RAMESH PONNURU

THERE'S a question Republican senator Bob Corker likes to ask at town meetings when he is home in Tennessee. "I ask people to raise their hands if they know anything about 'cap and trade.' I'm lucky if I get a hand go up," he says. "But this is going to affect people hugely in their daily lives."

The Senate is scheduled to debate a "cap and trade" bill in June. It would fight global warming by setting a limit on the emission of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide. That's the cap. Companies that got their emissions below their limit would be able to sell the excess emission rights to other companies. That's the trade. The theory is that the companies that could most cheaply reduce their emissions would have an incentive to do so. We would get the most emissions reduction possible for the smallest hit to the economy. "It's a market-based approach," says Democratic senator Joe Lieberman, who is sponsoring the legislation with Republican John Warner.

By June, Corker hopes, both his fellow senators and the public will know a lot more about cap and trade. He is becoming a leading critic of the bill—and he may be the most effective one in the Senate.

Junior senators rarely play a major role on important legislation. Corker was elected only in 2006. (He was the only new Republican senator elected that year.) Corker had been a CFO for the state, a successful real-estate executive, and the mayor of Chattanooga when he jumped into the race for the seat Bill Frist was giving up. He was not considered particularly ideological. Two congressmen ran to his right in the Republican primary, bringing up, for example, that Corker used to be pro-choice. The congressmen split the conservative vote and Corker had more money, so he won. In the general election the Democrats nominated Rep. Harold Ford, a smart moderate who gave Corker a tough race.

Since winning, Corker has turned out to be more conservative than people expected, particularly on the economic issues that most concern him. Earlier this year, almost all of his colleagues voted for a stimulus bill and a housing bill. Corker, moved by the quaint theory that such bills ought to stimulate the economy and help the housing market, voted no.

Corker is the most pleasant surprise conservatives have had in the Senate since Georgian Paul Coverdell served from 1993 to 2000. Conservatives assumed that Coverdell would be a moderate, but he turned out to be a hard-working champion of free-market health care and school choice until his untimely death. Corker is also hard-working, which goes farther in the Senate than you might think.

Early on, Corker decided that global warming was one of the top economic issues he would consider during his career. Unlike many other conservatives, he does not deny that the globe is warming. Nor does he spend time on the debate over how much of that warming is man-made. (That debate is something of a distraction: Even if sunspots have caused the warming, it might pose risks that we have to do something about.) He does not even say that he opposes cap and trade. He presents himself as merely raising concerns about the current version of it. He wants a "more informed conversation" about the bill, so as to get "a better product."

That may sound like weak opposition. But the concerns he is highlighting could prove deadly to the bill. By abandoning his party's weakest ground, the insistence that warming isn't happening, he has enabled himself to take on the weakest points on the other side.

He can get a hearing that other Republicans cannot. He recently met with the editors of the *Tennessean*, the newspaper where Al Gore used to work. The meeting resulted in an editorial reiterating the newspaper's belief that action must be taken, but also saying that the costs of this action should be kept within reason—and commending Senator Corker's efforts on the issue. Other newspapers in the state have also praised him. The Republican party, too, is moving in Corker's direction. When he talks to his Republican colleagues, he says, "I don't hear the 'hoax' word any more."

Most senators do not know much about global-warming policy. Senator McCain, for example, is an enthusiastic proponent of cap and trade. He sees it as an alternative to a carbon tax that would raise the price of gasoline, which he wants to lower. Actually, cap and trade would raise the price of gasoline too, and quite significantly, as oil companies passed along the legislation's costs to consumers.

Most economists, whether they favor cap and trade or not, see it as very similar to a carbon tax in its effects. The major difference is political. Senators know that voters would rebel against a direct increase in energy taxes. Cap and trade is an elaborately disguised version of the same thing. In addition, cap and trade would create more pressure groups with a financial interest in the government's policy.

Even former senator Phil Gramm, one of McCain's top economic advisers and a very smart man, does not see how similar cap and trade is to a carbon tax. While campaigning with McCain in New Hampshire, he told me that he does not support cap and trade, but prefers it to a carbon tax because it wouldn't raise money for the federal government. Actually, cap and trade would raise money for Washington, because it would be auctioning off many of the permits to emit greenhouse gases.

If you accept the estimates that Lieberman and Warner use for the cost of these permits, around $13 per ton of emissions, their bill would have the government raising $1 trillion through 2031. If you use a more realistic estimate—in the EU's existing cap and trade system, a ton costs $40—that figure rises quite a bit. The bill stipulates how that money will be spent, and it removes that spending from the normal budget process. Whatever else it is, Lieberman-Warner is a bill to raise taxes and spending.

States would get emission permits too. They would be expected to sell them and then use the proceeds to promote energy efficiency, mass transit, and the like. Corker asks: If Congress is not willing to spend all this money directly on mass transit, what's the point of doing it indirectly? Other, that is, than to disguise the wealth transfers taking place?

Corker has been nearly alone in raising these points. "The level of understanding around this issue in the House and Senate is lower than any issue I'm aware of," he says. Even on an issue as complex as health care, he notes, elected officials have "some practical experience." They rarely do on energy policy.

Corker plans to offer several amendments to the bill. He wants any money raised by auctions to be returned to taxpayers. He thinks that other energy subsidies should be cut. If we are setting up a quasi-market to determine how energy sources should be used within our emissions goals, he asks, what is the point of spending money on particular energy sources as well? And he will support other Republicans as they make the case for relying more on nuclear power. If the amendments pass, he says, he will have improved the bill. If they do not, he will have educated people about its drawbacks.

So far, both conservatives and liberals have approached global warming as though it were a culture-war issue rather than an empirical one. Whether one "believes in" global warming has been treated as a theological dividing line. But determining whether it exists, and how bad it is likely to be if so, should be only the beginning of a process of figuring out a response.

Liberals want to jump directly from "it's a problem" to draconian reductions in carbon emissions. Over the last few years they have labeled those who doubt the existence of global warming "denialists" (an allusion to Holocaust deniers). Now those who concede it but balk at cap and trade are being called "the new denialists." But the existence of trade-offs can't be shouted away—and it won't be if Senator Corker has anything to say about it. **NR**

■ **2008**

Bitter Is Better

For Hillary, that is

BYRON YORK

California, Pa.

IF Hillary Clinton has any chance to win the Democratic nomination, it is because of places like this. California (there's no agreed-on story about how the town got its name) is in the southwestern part of the state, which is sometimes referred to as "Pennsyltucky"—as much like Kentucky as Pennsylvania. Washington County, in which California is located, is 95 percent white; 81 percent of its adult residents do not have a college degree; and its median household income is $37,607. You've heard about those "working class" voters Barack Obama can't reach? Here they are.

And this evening, a few days before the Pennsylvania primary, a couple thousand of them have come to a gymnasium on the campus of California University of Pennsylvania to hear Hillary Clinton speak. State representative Peter Daley, born and raised in the area, warms them up with an introduction that mixes cheerleading with a concise demographic profile of the Clinton voter. "You're fighters!" says Daley, red-faced from his efforts to fire up the crowd. "You didn't go to Harvard! You weren't born with a silver spoon in your mouth! You live right here in this valley!"

As we wait for Senator Clinton—she can be an hour late to the most routine events—I wander through the crowd, asking people why they chose Clinton over Obama. "She has much, much more experience," a woman named Mildred tells me, "and she knows how to take care of things." "I'm a supporter of Hillary because I was a supporter of Bill," says a man named José. "When Bill was in office, we paid 88 cents a gallon for gas." "I just like her views—and she's a woman," says a woman named Patty.

But the crowd isn't just pro-Clinton. It's anti-Obama. Several people tell me they don't think they really know him, that they

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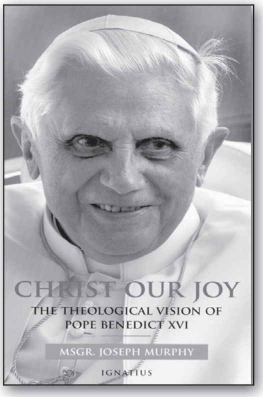
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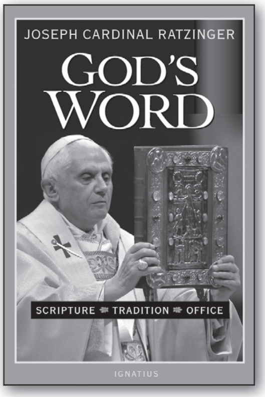
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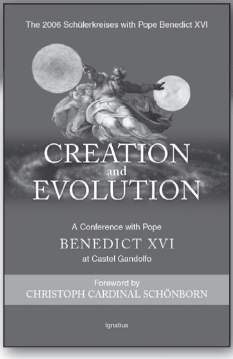
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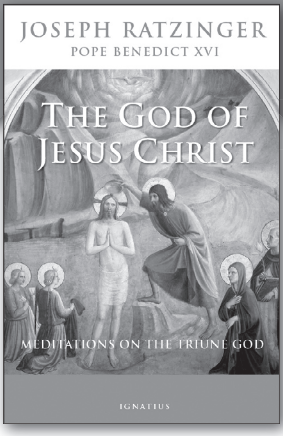
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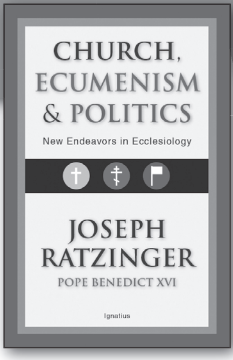
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ignatius press P.O. Box 1339, Ft. Collins, CO 80522 **1 (800) 651-1531** worry that new revelations about his life or his friends or his pastor, or who knows what, will sink his candidacy. And of course his infamous observation that people in places like Pennsyltucky are “bitter” after economic reverses, and thus cling to religion and guns, doesn’t sit particularly well, either. “Absolutely appalling,” Daley tells me.

Beyond that, they just don’t seem to trust the senator from Illinois. “He’s selling everybody a bill of goods about how he is going to change all these things, but he has no experience to say how he’s going to get there,” a man named Allen tells me. “I could tell you I’m going build you a house, and I’m going to do everything you want. I’m going to put everything in it just the way you want it. And then you give me your money, and you find out I’m not a carpenter.”

I ask people whether they’ll vote for Obama if he becomes the Democratic nominee. More than half say no—some quite emphatically. One man tells me he’ll move to Canada. Some say they’ll consider voting for John McCain, although many add that voting for a Republican would be nearly as difficult as voting for Obama. Several say they’ll just stay home.

> **It is simply impossible to overstate the doggedness of Hillary Clinton. She goes, and goes, and goes, and she takes blow after blow after blow, and keeps on going.**

A lot of political experts view this as the kind of tough talk you hear in the midst of a hotly contested primary race. Maybe it is. But when I go to an Obama rally a couple of days later in the nearby town of McKeesport, I ask a lot of his supporters the flip-side question: Will you vote for Clinton if she is the nominee? All of them say yes, although some seem pained by the prospect. When it comes to vowing to abandon the Democrats if the other guy wins, my little unscientific survey finds that is mostly the domain of Clinton supporters.

The difference in tone between Clinton’s rallies and Obama’s is quite striking. Unlike Obama at his best, there never is any magic to Clinton’s speeches. She calls her campaign events here “Solutions for Pennsylvania,” and she offers solution after solution after solution for a long list of problems and perceived problems and crises and perceived crises. Universal health care. Iraq. The cost of gas. The cost of homes. The cost of college loans. No Child Left Behind. (On that last one, it is remarkable how much antipathy there is in these crowds to George Bush and Ted Kennedy’s signature achievement in education; it’s sometimes the line that gets the loudest applause of the night.) “While my opponent says one thing and his campaign does another, you can count on me to tell you where I stand, and you can count on me to tell you very specifically the solutions that I’m offering for America,” Clinton tells the crowd. “I want you to know very specifically what I will do.” And they do, or at least they think they do.

When primary day comes, Washington County comes through for Clinton, giving her 71 percent of the vote to Obama’s 29. One precinct—Allenport, a town that is in the process of losing a steel mill—goes 86 percent for Clinton. Together, people in Pennsyltucky form the backbone of Clinton’s nearly ten-point victory.

The win—by a margin of about 214,000 votes—gives Clinton’s team a new talking point. If you add up all the votes she and Obama have won in the primaries, and you take out those caucuses in which the number of voters wasn’t counted, and you throw in Clinton’s victories in the disputed states of Florida and Michigan—if you do all that, Clinton has won more popular votes than Obama. “The popular vote is the most accurate measure,” Ann Lewis, senior adviser to the Clinton campaign, tells me. “In the general election, there won’t be any caucus states—every state votes like a primary. The more you approximate the general election, the stronger she is.”

Team Obama scoffs at that, and points out that in any event Obama still has the lead in delegates, which is how the Democratic nominee will be determined. But there’s no doubt that Clinton’s performance in Pennsylvania has impressed a lot of people. It is simply impossible to overstate the doggedness of this woman. She goes and goes and goes, and she takes blow after blow after blow, and keeps on going. The comedian Stephen Colbert was joking, sort of, when he said on CNN that Clinton has “shown that you could actually lop off her head, arms, and legs and she’ll crawl toward you using the muscles in her belly button.” Here’s betting that no one in the Obama campaign disagrees with that.

The only problem is, she’s messing things up for the dream candidate of a number of powerful voices both in the Democratic party and in the media. The more she wins, the louder the calls are for her to get out. On the day after her victory in Pennsylvania, the *New York Times* publishes an editorial, “The Low Road to Victory,” declaring that the Pennsylvania primary produced “yet another inconclusive result.” Clinton staffers scratch their heads; what is inconclusive about a ten-point win? But the *Times*, fretting that the campaign has been “even meaner, more vacuous, more desperate, and more filled with pandering than the mean, vacuous, desperate, pander-filled contests that preceded it,” lays the blame squarely on Clinton, calling on her to “acknowledge that the negativity, for which she is mostly responsible, does nothing but harm to her, her opponent, her party and the 2008 election.”

A couple of days later, the *Washington Post* leads its front page with a story headlined, “Party Fears Racial Divide; Attacks Could Do Lasting Harm, Democrats Say.” It’s not hard to guess whose attacks the paper is talking about. The Clinton-Obama marathon, the *Post* reports, “is unnerving core constituencies—African-Americans and wealthy liberals—who are becoming convinced that the party could suffer irreversible harm if Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton maintains her sharp line of attack against Sen. Barack Obama.”

Certainly Clinton would like to have better press—where are all those pundits who loved her in the 1990s?—but these days, bad press is just another obstacle to overcome, like Obama’s lead in pledged delegates. At the beginning of her campaign, Clinton tried to create the sense that she was the Inevitable Nominee. That’s long gone now, but in its place has grown the Unstoppable Candidate. The odds are still greatly against her, but no one believes she will quit until she wins—or those muscles in her belly button finally give out. **NR**

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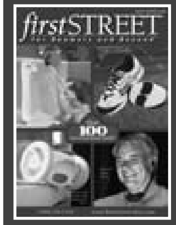

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■ 2008 II

A Curious Kind of Friendship

Barack Obama's dubious record on Israel

MARK HEMINGWAY

On April 21, Barack Obama found himself at a diner in Scranton, Pa. The Illinois senator hadn't been available to the press in ten days, so a reporter approached him.

Perhaps Obama was in a bad mood because he foresaw a drubbing—the next day, Pennsylvanian primary voters went for Hillary. Or maybe he just didn't like the reporter's question: "Senator, did you hear about Jimmy Carter's trip? He said he could get Hamas to negotiate."

Looking down at his breakfast, the senator snapped back, "Why can't I just eat my waffle?"

The week before, two important things had happened. One, Obama had declined to condemn Carter's meeting with Hamas, though Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had opposed the trip. Two, the Palestinian terrorist group took the unusual step of endorsing him. When asked about the endorsement, Obama's chief strategist, David Axelrod, was flattered that Hamas compared his candidate to JFK: "We all agree that John Kennedy was a great president, and it's flattering when anybody says that Barack Obama would follow in his footsteps." Republican nominee John McCain quickly took note. "We need change in America, but not the kind of change that wins kind words from Hamas," he said.

The day following Wafflegate, Obama told the press it was a "bad idea" for Carter to meet with Hamas, as it gave the group "a legitimacy that was unnecessary."

It's understandable that Obama would rather do just about anything than talk about the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Questions about Obama's support for Israel have percolated in Jewish publications and elsewhere for more than a year, and now they threaten to spill over into the mainstream media. In March, speaking to reporters in Texas, Obama defended his record: "Nobody has ever been able to point to statements that I made or positions that I've taken that are contrary to the long-term security interests in Israel and in any way diminish the special relationship we have with that country." Trouble is, this claim is simply not true.

Obama has been battling the perception that he is insufficiently supportive of Israel since last year, when he told the *Des Moines Register*, "Nobody is suffering more than the Palestinian people." An Iowa Democrat and member of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), David Adelman, called Obama's comments "deeply troubling." Obama claimed the remark was taken out of context, but the *Politico* noted that talk of Obama's comment was one of many reasons that a "real, if kind of inchoate, skepticism" dominated discussions of Obama at AIPAC's annual policy conference in March of last year.

Obama's life is marked by ties to anti-Israeli causes.

Whatever the context of that specific remark, many subsequent revelations have given ample reason for skepticism: Obama has repeatedly claimed to support Israel, but his record doesn't jibe with his rhetoric. Last year, he announced he would vote against an amendment in the Senate declaring Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps—which has long supported Hezbollah terrorists and otherwise abetted the murder of Israelis—a terrorist group. The resolution passed 76–22, with the support of Hillary Clinton, Illinois senator Dick Durbin, and a host of other reliable liberals. Obama missed the vote while campaigning in New Hampshire, but he attacked Clinton on the issue, saying the non-binding amendment might exacerbate tensions with Iran.

What's more, his life is marked by ties to anti-Israeli causes.

A recent report in the *Los Angeles Times* detailed Obama's close relationship with Rashid Khalidi, a professor of Arab studies at Columbia University. In the late 1970s Khalidi worked with WAFA, the official news agency of the Palestinian Liberation Organization; during this period, the PLO and its factions engaged in acts of terrorism. In 2005 Khalidi gained national attention when he argued that, under international law, Palestinians have a right to violently resist Israeli occupation.

While teaching at the University of Chicago, Khalidi co-founded the Arab American Action Network (AAAN), an organization with a history of churning out anti-Israeli propaganda. AAAN's current projects include "The Arab American Oral History Project." The group's website asks, "Do you have photos, letters or other memories you could share about Al-Nakba-1948?" "Al Nakba" translates as "the catastrophe," and 1948 is the year in which Israel became a state.

Khalidi held a fundraiser for Obama's failed congressional bid in 2000, while Obama was a state senator representing the liberal Hyde Park area of Chicago. In 2003, Obama attended a tribute dinner for Khalidi where, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, a speaker likened "Zionist settlers on the West Bank" to Osama bin Laden.

The largess flowed in both directions. From 1999 to 2002 Obama served on the board of directors of the Woods Fund, a grant-making foundation with assets of $68 million whose nominal goal is "to increase opportunities for less advantaged people and communities in the [Chicago] metropolitan area." According to tax forms and annual reports, in 2001 and 2002 the Woods Fund gave AAAN a total of $75,000 in grants. Bill Ayers, a former (and unrepentant) member of the left-wing terrorist group the Weather Underground, sat on the board with Obama.

The aforementioned *Politico* article also noted "[anti-Israeli] sentiment . . . circulating largely on private email lists and in chatter about a posting on the pro-Palestinian blog Electronic Intifada, which claimed (with little evidence) that Obama was once on the Palestinian side." For some time Electronic Intifada co-founder Ali Abunimah has been saying that, in private conversations, Obama expressed unequivocal pro-Palestinian views. Abunimah is an activist in Chicago's Palestinian community, and is on

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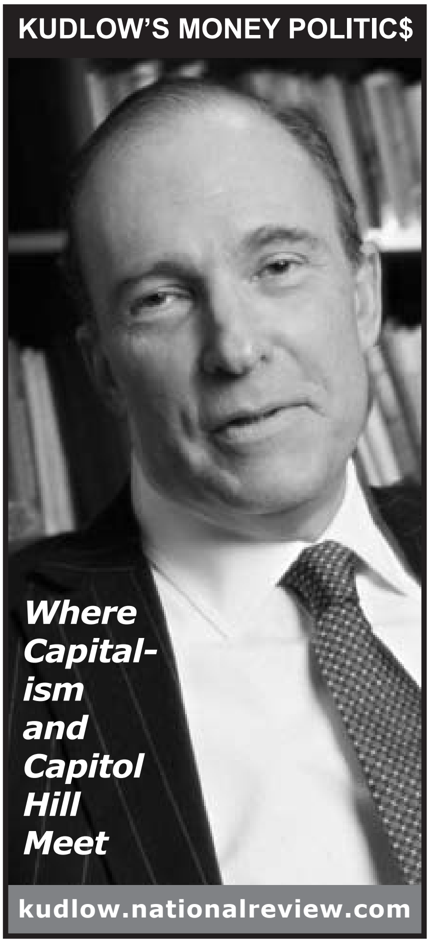
the board of AAAN, with which he has a long history of involvement. Given Obama's own involvement with Khalidi and AAAN, Abunimah's claim to have had such conversations with Obama seems plausible.

There have also been flaps over campaign advisers. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Jimmy Carter's national security adviser, has recently endorsed and campaigned with Obama. Brzezinski was singled out recently for defending *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, a book arguing that "the United States has been willing to set aside its own security in order to advance the interests of another state [Israel]." After a campaign press release described Robert Malley, an adviser to the Clinton administration on the Arab-Israeli conflict, as an Obama adviser, the campaign sought to distance itself from Malley—whom *New Republic* editor-in-chief Marty Peretz has called "a rabid hater of Israel."

When it comes to Israel, perhaps the most controversial member of Obama's campaign is his chief military adviser and national-campaign co-chairman, Gen. Merrill McPeak. In 1976, McPeak wrote an article for *Foreign Affairs* criticizing Israel for not returning to its 1967 borders and handing the Golan Heights back to Syria. McPeak accused Jewish and evangelical voters of placing their interest in Israel above U.S. interests in a 2003 interview with the *Oregonian*. When asked what was holding back world peace, McPeak responded, "New York City. Miami. We have a large vote . . . here in favor of Israel. And no politician wants to run against it." Obama disavowed McPeak's stance on Israel, but stands behind the campaign's relationship with the general.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Then there's Obama's pastor, Rev. Jeremiah Wright: "The Israelis have illegally occupied Palestinian territories for over 40 years now. . . . [We need to] wake Americans up concerning the injustice and the racism under which the Palestinians have lived because of Zionism." Last year, the bulletin at Wright's church reprinted an article by a Hamas official.

Given Obama's past and current relationships, the Jewish community is taking his rhetoric with hefty portions of sodium chloride. One well-known Jewish Democratic strategist says that with Obama running, McCain could equal or even surpass the 39 percent of the Jewish vote that Ronald Reagan captured against Jimmy Carter in 1980. This could be a major factor in swing states with significant Jewish populations, notably Florida and Pennsylvania. According to Pennsylvania-primary exit polls, Jews went for Hillary, 62 to 38 percent.

There are two ways of looking at all this. Perhaps Obama is privately hostile to Israel. Or perhaps he comes from a Hyde Park milieu so leftist that he saw these relationships as normal political connections. In a sense it doesn't matter: Regardless of why Obama tolerates terrorist sympathizers, the fact that he has a history of doing so could destroy his candidacy. On the national stage, and particularly in the Democratic party, Jews play a prominent role.

"A normal liberal politician wouldn't get near this—the political instinct would be, 'I don't want to touch this'—but none of it offended his sensibilities," the Jewish Democratic strategist said. "He sat there in rooms where Israel was likened to Osama bin Laden. He didn't walk out." **NR**

■ 2008 III

O to Be Superior!

The ObamaHeads project their bitterness

ROB LONG

A FEW nights ago, at a party in Hollywood, I overheard the following exchange. A woman in her 30s was explaining to another woman in her 30s what she had been up to recently.

"I've been spending a lot of time getting into Feldenkrais," she said, over the music. The other woman looked at her strangely and said nothing.

"It's been great. Just great," she continued.

No response. Just a kind of baffled half-smile.

"Have you ever thought about getting into it?" she asked. "It's great for your lower back."

At this point, the other woman suddenly snapped. "Wait," she said. "What is this you're talking about?"

"Feldenkrais," the first woman said.

"Felden*what*?"

"Krais."

"What?"

"Krais."

"How do you spell it?"

"Well, Felden, like it sounds—f-e-l-d-e-n, and then krais, k-r-a-i-s."

"*Oh*," the other woman said, suddenly beaming with relief. "Felden*krais*."

"Right," the first woman said. "It's a set of physical exercises invented by some German guy in 1890 or something. It's really helped my back trouble."

The other woman laughed. "I just misheard you!" she shouted, joyfully. "I thought you were saying something like *Fell in Christ*, and I just thought, *Oh my God, she's becoming some kind of Jesus person*, and I was like, *Whoa*. I was like, *How could this happen? I used to like this person!*"

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By John Fleming

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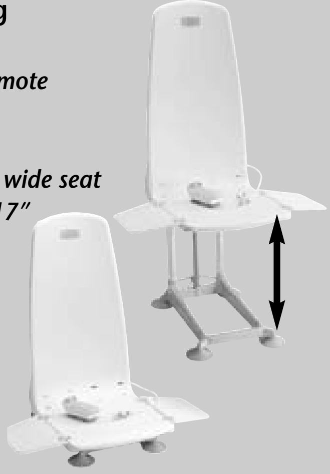

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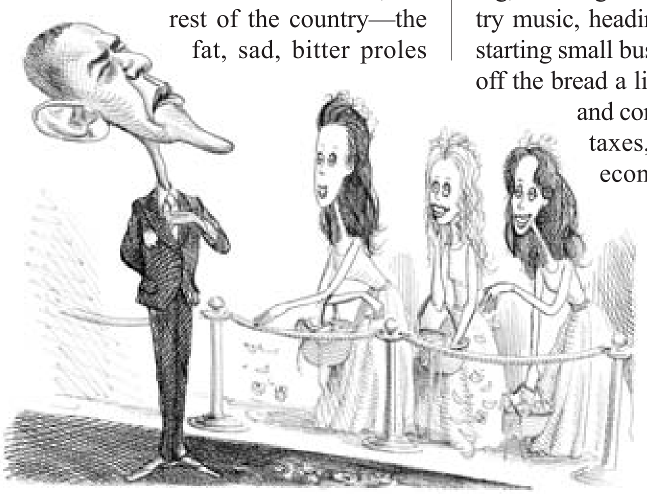
you know, *all Jesus-y*, and I moved off to get another beer.

Because in certain parts of the country—what we'll call, for the purposes of this discussion, ObamaWorld—it's quite alarming to suddenly discover that one of your circle is becoming religious. Well, a certain kind of religious: Hindu, Kabbalah, radical Wicca—all okay; start getting into Jesus, though, and the alarm bells go off. People start wondering why you feel you need that kind of thing, why you cling to such peculiar superstitions.

God forbid you shoot a deer. Or want to secure the borders. Because then it's an echo chamber of: What are you afraid of? What are you so angry about? Why—to use the language of Barack Obama, speaking recently in San Francisco, the World Headquarters of ObamaWorld—are you so *bitter*?

For ObamaHeads, though, that's a rhetorical question. They can head-shake and cluck-cluck and nod sadly all night long about what, exactly, the Jesus-'n'-guns-'n'-wall-buildin' crowd is bitter about. "It's obvious, isn't it?" they say to one another over Fair Trade coffee or Rhône-style whites from the Central Coast. They're bitter about lopsided trade deals; about a faltering economy, a weak dollar, a country run by plutocrats. The sticks and thickets just at the edge of ObamaWorld seethe and bubble like a cauldron of fear, hate, and bitterness—and to communicate with them, your words must be honeyed and smooth, calming and unthreatening, and, you know, easy to understand. That's another thing they're bitter about: They're stupid, and they know it.

For the residents of ObamaWorld, the rest of the country—the fat, sad, bitter proles who hang out at the DQ and buy stuff sold on television—is like one big Special Ed class, one giant short bus that needs to be managed, coaxed, head-shrunk into making the right choices. Just as the policy initiatives of the Left have drifted into the realm of therapy and mental rehabilitation (diversity initiatives, sexuality education, hate-speech retraining), so has their outreach strategy. In the really old days, it was going to a lecture and getting pressured by a Red labor organizer; in the old days, it was going to an SDS meeting after class and noticing how promiscuous the girls were; in the recent past, though, it's been one long therapy session: consciousness-raising meetings and purging confessionals ("I feel so *guilty* about my parents' maid!") and workshops—endless, endless workshops—on odd little topics like "Heteronormative Tropes and How to (Re)Present Them" and "Toward a Green Consciousness" and "Racism in the Academy: Far Still to Go," all of them designed to help the 21st-century Left, which has twisted and tortured itself with its inflexible and expanding list of correct attitudes. When Hillary Clinton—*Hillary Clinton!*—is deemed by many on the left to be insufficiently lefty, and when Hillary Clinton—*Hillary Clinton!*—has been out-elited, out-twee'd, out-latte'd by a rival candidate, one thing is clear: The Left has tied itself in knots.


ROMAN GENN

Meanwhile, the bitter proles are sitting quietly at the Olive Garden, chowing down on breadsticks, or sunning themselves at the NASCAR track, bursting out of their tank tops and swilling beer. They're driving around with the AC blasting, listening to soft-rock or, worse, country music, heading to megachurches and starting small businesses and trying to lay off the bread a little. They're upset, sure; and concerned, of course, about taxes, schools, Iraq, and the economy—who isn't? But the most remarkable thing about America and Americans, at every point in our history, is how cheerful we are, how optimistic, how unbitter. We can be cranky, sure. Even a quick dash out of the ObamaDome, though, would tell you that the church-going, deer-blasting, border-patrolling American is a lot of things—heavier than he should be, carrying too many credit cards, etc.—but he isn't bitter.

If he were, he'd be voting for Obama. And he isn't. In the Democratic party, anyway, the voters that Obama has a hard time reaching—the ones he's diagnosed as bitter and clingy—seem to be going for the middle-aged gal in the pantsuit, the familiar face, the high-school principal.

Well, since Obama led us down this path of psychoanalyzing the opposition, let's do a little couch-tripping ourselves. When Obama and his ObamaHeads gather under the ObamaDome, purring their soft sympathies at the foolish American fatso who is so blinded by his bitterness that he can't put down his gun or turn away from his God, they could be doing what we old-school Freudians call *projecting*. A few clicks though the left-wing blogosphere, a few pages into the local alt-weekly, a minute or so listening to Air America (if it's still broadcasting) will be more than enough bitterness to last you for the afternoon.

Spend a little time at a dinner party in ObamaWorld and it's a carousel of complaints, about Bush and Cheney and Halliburton and Big Oil and Scooter Libby and waterboarding and Abu Ghraib and hedge funds and Florida in 2000 and flag lapel pins and on and on and on. The conversation bubbles and percolates with dyspeptic eruptions about all of the many, many, many things about America, circa 2008, that are wrong and awful and corrupt and derelict. For that matter, the gang that cheers and claps and laps up the insane mutterings of Rev. Jeremiah Wright—gosh, they seem awfully bitter. Maybe they should be spoken to in cool, soothing tones. Maybe we need another short bus.

And one of the key—indeed, most bitter—complaints of the people who live in the ObamaDome? That everyone else isn't bitter *enough*. That while the Left is spinning itself into an angry funk about everything—the climate! the war! the plight of the transgendered!—the gun-toting Jesus-freaks are getting another Big Gulp on the way to the Cabela's outlet, listening to Christian rock and singing along.

Bitter? Methinks thou dost protest too much. **NR**

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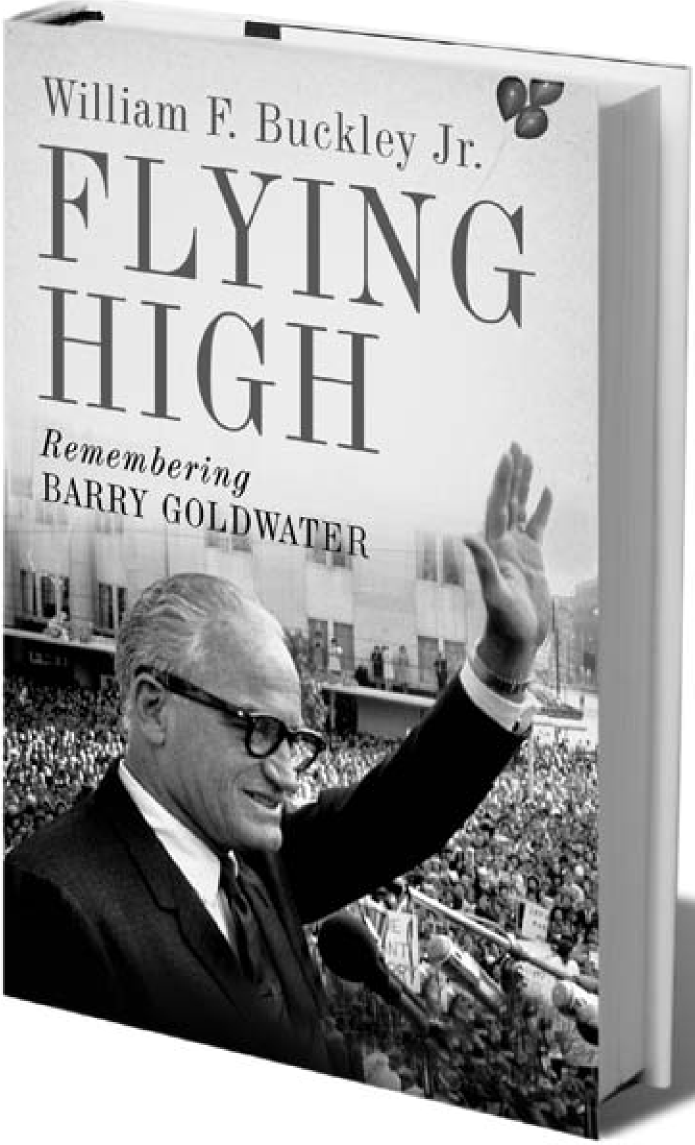

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■ COVER STORY

‘Context,’ You Say?

A guide to the radical theology of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright

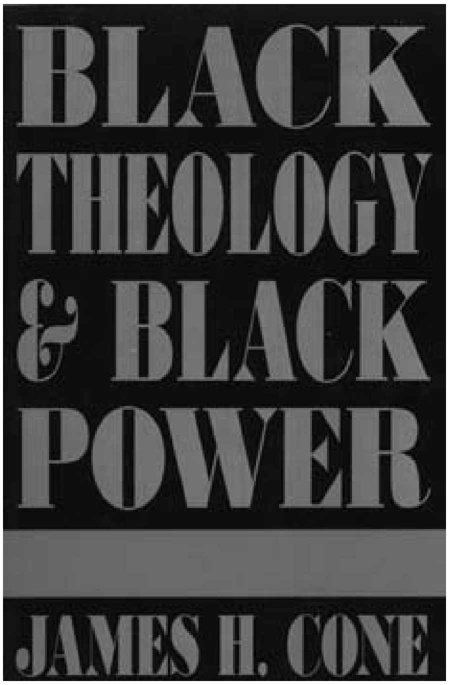
STANLEY KURTZ

WHAT we’ve got here is failure to contextualize. If nothing else, Jeremiah Wright’s defenders and enablers are right about that. To fully understand those “sound bites” and “snippets” calling on God to damn America, accusing the U.S. government of intentionally spreading HIV among blacks, and blaming 9/11 on America’s allegedly terrorist history and foreign policy, we do need more context.

Far from exonerating Wright, however, removing those notorious sermon-segments from their endless video loop and firmly placing them in their social, political, historical, and theological context is even more damning (you’ll forgive the expression) than the original YouTube videos. The full story of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright’s theology and church adds considerable urgency to already-pressing questions about Barack Obama’s judgment in choosing this man as his mentor and pastor.

Wright’s defenders have portrayed Chicago’s Trinity United Church of Christ as “well within the mainstream of the black church” while downplaying its militancy and politicization. In fact, Wright’s church is not only thoroughly politicized, but is arguably the most radical black church in the country. The substance and style of Wright’s infamous remarks are part and parcel of a broader, and proudly radical, theology. The bold denunciations are not distractions or somehow beside the point, but are the culmination and justification of Wright’s prophetic vocation. Even his famous “Audacity to Hope” sermon, which led to Obama’s conversion and baptism, fits into this framework.

A scarcely concealed, Marxist-inspired indictment of American capitalism pervades contemporary “black-liberation theology.” Far from the mainstream, Trinity (and the relatively small band of other churches that share its worldview) sees itself as marginalized and radical, struggling in the face of an overwhelming rejection of its political theology by mainstream black churches.



THE FOUNDER

James H. Cone, founder and leading light of black-liberation theology, is the Charles A. Briggs Distinguished Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Theological Seminary, New York. Wright acknowledges Cone’s work as the basis of Trinity’s perspective, and Cone points to Trinity as the church that best exemplifies his message. Cone’s 1969 book *Black Theology and Black Power* is the founding text of black-liberation theology, predating even much of the influential, Marxist-inspired liberation theology that swept Latin America in the 1970s. Cone’s work is repeatedly echoed in Wright’s sermons and statements. While Wright and Cone differ on some minor issues, Cone’s theology is the first and best place to look for the intellectual context within which Wright’s views took shape.

Cone credits Malcolm X—particularly his famous dismissal of Christianity as the white man’s religion—with shaking him out of his theological complacency. In Malcolm’s words:

Mr. Kurtz is a senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

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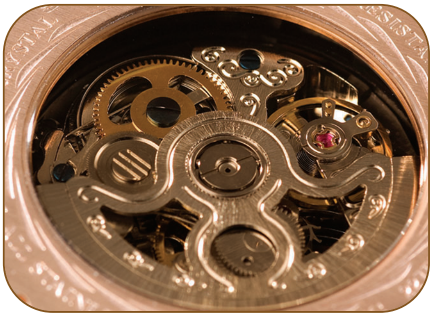

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> The white man has brainwashed us black people to fasten our gaze upon a blond-haired, blue-eyed Jesus! We're worshiping a Jesus that doesn't even *look* like us! Oh, yes! . . . The blond-haired, blue-eyed white man has taught you and me to worship a *white* Jesus, and to shout and sing and pray to this God that's *his* God, the white man's God. The white man has taught us to shout and sing and pray until we *die*, to wait until *death*, for some dreamy heaven-in-the-hereafter . . . while this white man has his milk and honey in the streets paved with golden dollars here on *this* earth!??

In the late 1960s, Malcolm X's criticisms (Wright calls them "devastating") were adopted by the founders of the black-power movement, such as Stokely Carmichael, the Black Panthers, and Ron Karenga. Shaken by Malcolm's rejection of Christianity and taken with the movement for black power, Cone, a young theologian and initially a devout follower of Martin Luther King Jr., set out to reconcile black power with Christianity. He did not reject Malcolm's disdain for a "blond-haired, blue-eyed Jesus"—rather, he came to believe that Jesus was black, and that an authentic Christianity, grounded in Jesus's blackness, would focus with full force on black liberation. Authentic Christianity would bring radical social and political transformation and, if necessary, violent revolution in the here and now.

James H. Cone

Cone understood his task as both "radical" and "prophetic." It was radical in demanding deep transformation in the structure of society and prophetic in its determinedly angry and denunciatory tone. *Black Theology and Black Power*, says Cone in the book's introduction, is "written with a definite attitude, the attitude of an angry black man." Cone demands and commends anger, criticizes contemporary theologians for the "coolness" of their writings, and notes that "there is some evidence that Jesus got angry." In the book, Cone sometimes addresses or refers to whites as simply "the oppressor" or "Whitey."

The black intellectual's goal, says Cone, is to "aid in the destruction of America as he knows it." Such destruction requires both black anger and white guilt. The black-power theologian's goal is to tell the story of American oppression so powerfully and precisely that white men will "tremble, curse, and go mad, because they will be drenched with the filth of their evil." In the preface to his 1970 book, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, Wright wrote: "There will be no peace in America until whites begin to hate their whiteness, asking from the depths of their being: 'How can we become black?'"

So what exactly is "black power"? Echoing Malcolm X, Cone defines it as "complete emancipation of black people from white oppression by whatever means black people deem necessary." Open, violent rebellion is very much included in "whatever means"; like the radical anti-colonial theorist Frantz Fanon, on whom he sometimes draws, Cone sees violent rebellion as a transformative expression of the humanity of the oppressed. Drawing on existential theology, Cone defends those who looted during the urban riots of the late 1960s as affirming their "being," rather than simply grasping and destroying. Modifying Descartes, Cone explains the rioters' implicit message as "I rebel, therefore *we* exist."

LIBERAL RACISTS

While Cone asserts that blacks hate whites, he denies that this hatred is racism. Black racism, says Cone, is "a myth created by whites to ease their guilt feelings." Black hatred of whites is simply a legitimate reaction to "oppression, insult, and terror." Cone derides accusations of black racism as a mere "device of white liberals."

Indeed, one of the most striking features of *Black Theology and Black Power* is its strident attack on white liberals. According to Cone, "when white do-gooders are confronted with the style of Black Power, realizing that black people really place them in the same category with the George Wallaces, they react defensively, saying, 'It's not my fault' or 'I am not responsible.'" But Cone insists that white, liberal do-gooders are every bit as responsible as the most dyed-in-the-wool segregationists. Well before it became a cliché, Cone boldly set forth the argument for institutional racism—the notion that "racism is so embedded in the heart of American society that few, if any, whites can free themselves from it."

The liberal's favorite question, says Cone, is "What can I do?" He replies that, short of turning radical and putting their lives on the line behind a potentially violent revolution, liberals can do nothing. The real liberal question to blacks, says Cone, is "What can I do and still receive the same privileges as other whites *and*—this is the key—be liked by Negroes?" Again, he answers, "Nothing." To prove it, he pointedly dismisses the original bogus white liberal, Abraham Lincoln, who after all was more concerned with holding the Union together than with ending slavery.

For Cone, the deeply racist structure of American society leaves blacks with no alternative but radical transformation or social withdrawal. So-called Christianity, as commonly practiced in the United States, is actually the racist Antichrist. "Theologically," Cone affirms, "Malcolm X was not far wrong when he called the white man 'the devil.'" The false Christianity of the white-devil oppressor must be replaced by an authentic Christianity fully identified with the poor and oppressed:

> The religious ideas of the oppressor are detrimental to the black people's drive for freedom. They tend to make black people non-violent and accept only the prescribed patterns of protest defined by the oppressor himself. It is the oppressor who attempts to tell black people what is and is not Christian—though he is least qualified to make such a judgment.

To revolutionize or eliminate these faulty "white values," black

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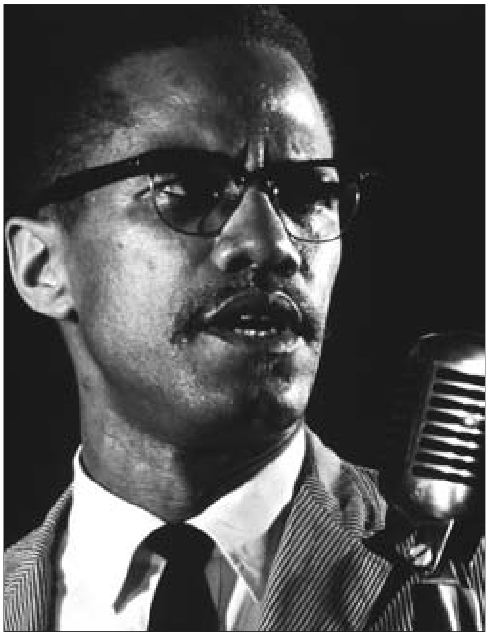
THE *people* OF AMERICA'S
OIL AND NATURAL GAS INDUSTRY

pastors and theologians must reject the influence of "white seminaries with their middle-class white ideas about God, Christ, and the Church." "This does not necessarily mean burning of their buildings with Molotov cocktails," says Cone. But it does require the replacement of middle-class consciousness with "black consciousness," with "a theology which *confronts* white society as the racist Antichrist, communicating to the oppressor that nothing will be spared in the fight for freedom."

So until the advent of a genuine revolution (in which, it is true, black people would likely join with white radicals and poor whites against middle-class whites), blacks "must withdraw and form their own culture, their own way of life." To regain their identity, they "must affirm the very characteristic which the oppressor ridicules—*blackness*." Only such affirmation can counteract the deadly process in which black people have been stripped of their culture and taught to hate their very blackness.

Cone's radicalism is evident in his categorical rejection of anything short of total social revolution: "It does not matter how many gains are made in civil rights. Progress is irrelevant." Black hatred of whites is every bit as justified as hatred of Germans by Jews, says Cone. The Jewish Holocaust was "one, big soul-wracking 'incident,'" but American blacks endure a slow-motion holocaust in "constant jolts." For Cone, then, short of revolution, white society cannot improve, and blacks are enduring a perpetual de facto holocaust as long as they stay inside it.


Malcolm X

BOB PARENT/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY

STILL ANGRY

One might dismiss *Black Theology and Black Power* as a relic of the radical Sixties. As far as the vast majority of black churches are concerned, that is true, but Trinity and a small group of radical congregations and prestigious divinity schools don't see it that way. In those precincts, Cone is lauded, and his early work is read, celebrated, and republished in anniversary editions.

In 1998, in anticipation of the book's 30th anniversary, the University of Chicago held a three-day conference in honor of *Black Theology and Black Power*. Martin Marty, the prominent University of Chicago historian of Christianity who once taught, and has lately defended, Wright, was a key sponsor of that conference. C-SPAN taped the event, and students (some of them still in high school), community members, and politicians (including Obama?) attended. Cone himself spoke, saying, "Thirty years later . . . I am still just as angry." Yet the most forceful testimony to the living power of Cone's text may be the fact that its outlines are reflected in nearly every aspect of the controversy surrounding Reverend Wright. Rumors of the Sixties' death, it would seem, are greatly exaggerated.

What exactly would Cone's ideal, post-revolutionary society look like? Cone has no better answer to that than did other Sixties revolutionaries, yet his fundamental social and economic perspective is Marxist. He would like to see capitalism replaced by some form of "democratic socialism." His nod to revolution in *Black Theology and Black Power* was not systematically Marxist, but after extended encounters with liberation theologians from Latin America in the 1970s, Cone took up Marx more seriously.

In his 1982 book, *My Soul Looks Back*, Cone updates us: "The black church cannot remain silent regarding socialism, because such silence will be interpreted by our Third World brothers and sisters as support for the capitalistic system, which exploits the poor all over this earth." And: "We cannot continue to speak against racism without any reference to a radical change in the economic order. I do not think that racism can be eliminated as long as capitalism remains intact."

But what about Marxism's rejection of God, and the claim that religion is the "opium of the people"? Cone concedes that white and black middle-class religion may stultify action, just as he conceded the soundness of Malcolm X's attack on dreamy, heaven-in-the-hereafter faith. Yet Cone argues that liberation theology is not an opiate but "a tonic that gives courage and strength in the struggle for freedom." The problem, says Cone, is not liberation theology but the false Christianity of middle-class blacks who are "upset with American society only because they want a larger piece of the capitalistic pie." Cone concludes: "Perhaps what we need today is to return to that 'good old-time religion' of our grandparents and combine with it a Marxist critique of society. Together black religion and Marxist philosophy may show us the way to build a completely new society."

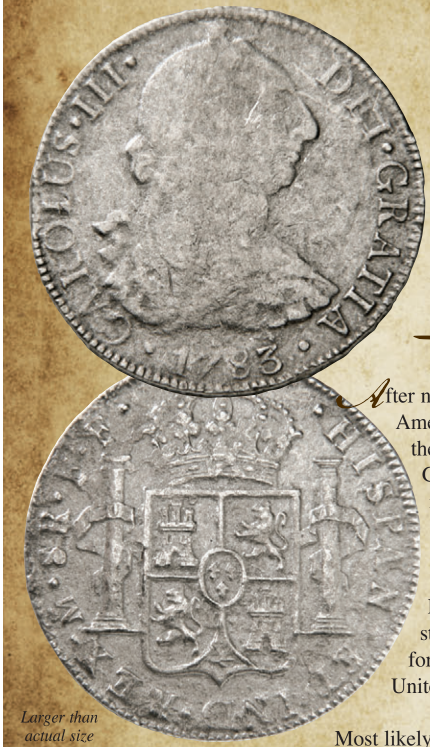
Asked about these writings in a recent interview, Cone said, "I'm not a Marxist. . . . I'm a theologian, and I want to change society. I was searching for my way forward. I want a society in which people have the distribution of wealth, but I don't know quite how to do that institutionally." There is actually no contradiction between this carefully worded statement and Cone's position in *My Soul Looks Back*. He is chiefly a theologian, and has no specific economic program. Yet he seeks an alliance with Marxists and adopts a fundamentally Marxist analysis and critique of capitalism.

TRINITY TRANSFORMED

Cone's theology sheds revealing light on the history and social setting of Wright's early adulthood and later ministry at Trinity. In his first two years of college, Wright participated in the student civil-rights–sit-in movements of 1960 and 1961, where, he says, "I saw white Christian racism up close and 'in my face.'" While singing as a soloist in historically black Virginia Union University's traveling choir, Wright struggled to sort out his call to the ministry and his view of "the 'honkies' I was growing to hate with each passing day."

Years later, as Wright was completing a bachelor's degree at Howard University, also historically black, the school's famed

FOUND!



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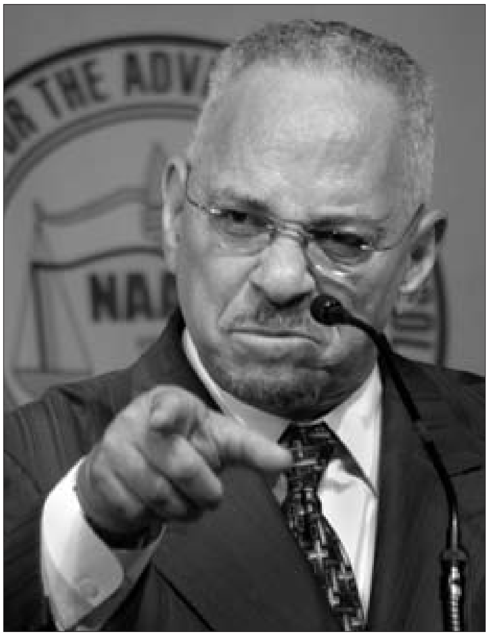
choir sang only classical music. Gospel or jazz, and even more so African music, was forbidden. This did not sit well with Howard students, who rebelled during the turbulence that followed Martin Luther King's assassination in 1968 (just as Cone was composing *Black Theology and Black Power*). The Howard choir, with which Wright feels an ongoing connection, was outraged to be barred from singing Duke Ellington or Count Basie, even as these American geniuses were being granted honorary degrees by white schools. Says Wright, the choir was "tired of singing German lieder and Italian arias to prove they were intelligent. They wanted to sing their own music."

In those days, Trinity was one of the few predominantly black congregations in the liberal United Church of Christ denomination. Trinity had been formed by the UCC at the height of the early civil-rights movement, and the initial goal was to build a fully integrated church. Trinity's ethos was decidedly middle-class. "Unfortunately," says Wright, in those days "the notion of integration meant that blacks should adopt a white lifestyle, a white way of worship, European values, and European-American ways of viewing reality." Trinity's congregation sang hymns from "white hymnals," priding itself on services that could "out-white white people's services." In 1967, in a step viewed as misguided by today's Trinity congregants, the old Trinity rebuffed a call for cooperation from the Black Panther Party.


Jeremiah Wright

BILL PUGLIANO/GETTY

As the black-power movement spread in the wake of the King assassination, Trinity resisted. In the broader black community, post-'68, "aspirations for integration and assimilation were being replaced by those of black pride and separation," writes Julia Speller, a leader at today's Trinity, in her history of the congregation. While the old Trinity's middle-class congregants had enthusiastically supported the civil-rights movement, even this was challenged, says Speller, "as the African Americans of the nation lost faith in American systems and sought empowerment through self-help and revolution." Membership soon dwindled to 87 adults.

In 1972, Trinity finally decided to seek a more black-identified style of worship, and a fuller relationship with the surrounding black community. In Jeremiah Wright, with his raft of higher degrees and his desire to revive and develop black musical forms, Trinity believed it had found an ideal new pastor. Wright transformed Trinity's service—the choir took up quasi-dance stepping and swaying moves, along with African dashikis, drums, tambourines, and washboards—and the congregation grew exponentially.

Although Trinity had brought on Wright with change in mind, the original congregants were not prepared for the extremes to which Wright's "Africentrism" and black-liberation theology would take him. Wright arrived in 1972, and by 1975 nearly all of the members who had originally invited him had left. In 1983 a group of particularly active and prominent members uncomfortable with Wright left Trinity and the UCC for a local Pentecostal Apostolic church.

In 1978 there was trouble with the UCC as well, as a national-level official attempted to distance the church from Trinity. Says Speller, "Trinity was accused of being a cult (only three months after Jim Jones and Jonestown!) and Wright of having an 'ego problem.'" The unnamed official failed in his efforts, and after church-sponsored attempts at "reconciliation" offered an apology to Trinity.

INTO AFRICA

Although Wright had been nominally Africentric all along, it was not until the late 1980s that he actually traveled to Africa. These visits provoked a change in his thinking. In *Black Theology and Black Power*, Cone had spoken as if blacks had been essentially stripped of their African heritage by slavery. Wright had never been fully comfortable with this view, and instead had stressed continuities between Africans and American blacks. Now, after seeing Africa, Wright moved seriously in the direction of identification with Africa, infusing his sermons and worship at Trinity with anti-apartheid (and other Africa-related) political activism. This, of course, was the very moment at which Barack Obama, still trying to reconcile his own complex African and American identities, encountered Wright.

The 1988 "Audacity to Hope" sermon invoked the privation and oppression of "black and brown" citizens in Africa and the rest of the world. To a superficial ear, the sermon may seem simply to call for aid to the world's hungry. For those attuned to Wright's theology, however, it contains a scarcely veiled attack on Western capitalism, which Wright believes is the true cause of the suffering and privation of the "black and brown" world.

There are several different transcripts of the "Audacity" speech—Wright gave it multiple times, changing it along the way, and some published versions may be toned down for general consumption. But the one included in *What Makes You So Strong?*, a collection of Wright speeches, attacks "white America's corporate dollars that hold and pull the purse strings of so many national black organizations." For Wright, this corporate money turns middle-class blacks into "slaves."

So Wright believes that American capitalism is both the underlying cause of the poverty and suffering of black people abroad, and the sinfully tempting apple that lures deluded middle-class blacks to enslave themselves to corporate white America. In this he follows Cone. Attacks on capitalism are scattered throughout Wright's sermons, and it is difficult to believe that someone as sharp as Obama could have failed to pick up on this radical message. Indeed, it's difficult to read or hear almost anything by Wright without figuring it out.

Wright's Cone connection remains strong. Cone's recent work argues that the crucifixion of Jesus was essentially a public lynching, with the Romans anticipating the role of modern white Americans. This analogy shapes the recent sermon/article in which Wright refers to ancient Roman "garlic noses." Wright's invocation of Thomas Jefferson's "pedophilia" (i.e., Jefferson's relationship with Sally Hemings) also echoes recent remarks by Cone.

Sadly, the excesses of "middle-class black assimilationism"—such as denying choirs access to greats like Duke Ellington and Count Basie—provoked in Cone and Wright a still more extreme and damaging counter-response. The tragedy is that the members of the old Trinity seem to have genuinely sought a middle way. They were ready for a shift away from assimilationist extremes, yet they refused to repudiate "middle-classness" or embrace a radical rejection of American culture.

Wright, Cone, and the academics and politicians who excuse and enable them are stuck in a late-Sixties time warp. To Wright, middle-class blacks are abandoning poor blacks to gain a piece of the capitalist pie. The tragedy of the 1990s, says Wright, is that "most African Americans have now given psychological assent to their oppressors and to their enslavement. We have gotten the chains off our bodies and put them on our minds!"

FALSE ANALOGIES

Defenders of Trinity's Africentrism compare it to the harmless Celticentrism of Catholic churches that are predominately Irish. This analogy is flawed—such churches do not insist that Jesus was Irish, that his ministry was identified solely with the sufferings of the Irish oppressed, that non-Irish churches are the Antichrist, or that middle-class Irish who foolishly ape mainstream American ways are collaborating in their own enslavement to an intrinsically oppressive capitalist system. If Irish Catholics had been Celticentric in this sense, the great success story of Irish-immigrant assimilation would never have been written. And had Wright expanded the elements of black culture at Trinity without actually repudiating black aspirations to fully join the American middle class, as the original congregants had hoped, it might have opened up a far better solution for Chicago's blacks. That road not taken would have been the real analogue to the Celticentrism of Irish Catholic churches.

At the heart of Cone's and Wright's refusals to enter the mainstream of American culture lies the ongoing conviction that, appearances to the contrary, nothing in American race relations has improved. No matter how different things look today, it's all just a disguised form of slavery or holocaust. Cone's original attempt to justify black hatred of whites by equating America with Nazi Germany was unconvincing, but the slavery/Holocaust analogy lives on as the indispensable linchpin of black-liberation theology.

Ultimately, this theological need to see slavery and holocaust alive in the American present (along with Cone's call for angry, prophetic denunciations) stands behind Wright's infamous sermon clips. In 2005, Wright co-edited an anthology of essays called *Blow*

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June 4, 2008
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1998-2008
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the Trumpet in Zion. In that reader, Cone singles out the large black prison population as the latest example of "the nearly four-hundred-year-long history of terror against Black people in the United States." Of course, this same theme appears in Wright's notorious "sound bites" and "snippets." Wright embraces the canard that the U.S. government is intentionally infecting the black population with HIV to justify his theological notion of an ongoing holocaust—and thereby validate his refusal to make peace with America or its capitalist system. Echoing Cone's early writings, another essay from *Blow the Trumpet in Zion* castigates preachers for being "so mealymouthed" when it comes to denouncing political evil. Obviously, Wright has taken that message to heart.

Wright's denunciation of America for bringing 9/11 on itself explicitly invokes Malcolm X's notorious claim that John F. Kennedy's assassination was a case of America's chickens coming home to roost. Wright's tale of America's long history of "terrorism"—from our attacks on the Indians, to our attacks on Cubans in Grenada (Wright has visited Cuba three times), to our bombing of Muammar Qaddafi, to America's support for Israel's "state terrorism"—comes straight out of Cone's historical playbook.

More deeply, Wright's view of 9/11 parallels Cone's startling attacks on "liberal do-gooders." Cone refuses to concede that white liberals can be innocent of racism. In the same fashion, Wright refuses to concede American innocence in the matter of 9/11. Since Wright sees American capitalism and the military power that defends it as fundamentally responsible for the world's misery, no American can escape guilt for his participation in this system.

CONTEXT

When we consider that nearly the whole of Wright's original congregation left, that other active members departed, and that Wright's radicalism made relations in the United Church of Christ rocky, Barack Obama's decision to stay appears all the more striking. Indeed, *Blow the Trumpet in Zion* is filled with attempts by Cone's followers to come to grips with their rejection by the broader black community. Nearly every sermon Wright preaches, as well as his now-infamous bulletins and church magazines, is filled with his radicalism, and it's therefore impossible not to conclude that Obama was broadly attracted to Wright's politics. Interestingly, Obama's remarks on unemployed workers' clinging to conventional religion as a sop are not at all inconsistent with Cone's or Wright's—or for that matter Malcolm X's—views.

Obama has now attempted to distance himself from Wright, claiming to be "outraged" by the reverend's recent comments. Yet it's hard to believe that Obama heard anything in the past few weeks that he hadn't heard before. What gives outrage only now has been going on for decades.

In his rejection of the path of assimilation; in his contempt for "middle-classness" and the capitalist system it sustains; in his pursuit of a separate, black Christianity and his hostility to conventional religion; in his bitter and "prophetic" denunciations of America's history, its founding icons and its anti-Qaddafi, pro-Israel foreign policy; in his conviction that the U.S. government is responsible for genocide against blacks; and in his insistence that Americans are collectively guilty for 9/11, Jeremiah Wright is a true follower of James Cone's theology of black liberation. It would seem the only thing worse than quoting Jeremiah Wright out of context is quoting him in context. **NR**

■ **2008 IV**

Auto-Immune Diversity Syndrome

That from which the Democrats suffer

NOEMIE EMERY

THE Democrats' historic, barrier-breaking election, long sought after and long hoped for, is not working out quite as planned. Surely no one imagined that the first female major-party candidate for vice president (Geraldine Ferraro), speaking in the interest of the first woman with a credible chance to be president (Hillary Clinton), would attack the first potential black president (Barack Obama) as an affirmative-action hire who has been unfairly privileged. Meanwhile, it turned out that the black candidate, the agent of healing who would move us all beyond race, had somehow slept through 20 years of anti-white, anti-American sermons by his good friend and mentor, the pastor of his Chicago church.

Ferraro was dumped from her (non-paying) job with the Clinton campaign after Obama's backers called her a racist, but the story did not end there. Trying to exercise damage control after Reverend Wright's rants had ignited a furor, Obama posited an equivalence between Ferraro and the renegade pastor: "We can dismiss Reverend Wright as a crank or a demagogue, just as some have dismissed Geraldine Ferraro in the aftermath of her recent statements as harboring some deep-seated racial bias." Shortly after that speech, Obama linked Wright to his own grandmother, a "typical white person" who, like Jesse Jackson, was sometimes frightened when she saw young black men in the street. Ferraro defended herself and Obama's grandmother in an impassioned address: "To equate what I said with what this racist bigot has said from the pulpit is unbelievable. . . . He is spewing that stuff out to young people . . . and putting it in their heads that it's okay to say 'God damn America,' and that it's okay to beat up on white people."

Ferraro, of course, is a liberal hero, the three-term Queens congresswoman picked out of obscurity by Fritz Mondale in 1984 to run on his ticket in response to threats from his feminist backers. It is ironic beyond words to find her attacked by her putative allies for suggesting that another potential barrier-breaker might be just as underprepared for his breakthrough position as she was for hers.

All this is par for the course at Diversity Central, where a sudden eruption of too many "firsts" has created a crisis for Democrats. Having learned over the past three decades the effectiveness of charging racism or sexism as a last resort, or even a first one,

Noemie Emery, a contributing editor of *The Weekly Standard*, is the author of *Great Expectations: The Troubled Lives of Political Families*.

You deserve a factual look at . . .

"One Land for Two Peoples"

Is it a solution to the Arab/Israeli conflict or a recipe for disaster?

For decades, the declared thrust of the Palestinians has been their desire of having their own state – in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and in the Gaza Strip. Now, a new idea has taken hold and is propagated in national media: a binational state, encompassing those territories and "Israel proper." The slogan is "One Land for Two Peoples."

What are the facts?

Review of history: The Arabs have launched four major wars against Israel, at the end of which Israel remained in possession of all the lands west of the Jordan River, the undivided city of Jerusalem, the vast Sinai, the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip. In what was in all likelihood a major act of folly, but in order to attain peace with Egypt, Israel returned the Sinai to Egypt. But the peace with Egypt is the coldest imaginable.

> "The Palestinians, just as the over one million Arabs now living in Israel with full rights as citizens, could be part of Israel, with full autonomy and with their own internal governance…"

Thus, having been unable to defeat Israel in war and unable to wear it down by their "intifadas," the Arabs had to think up something new in order to destroy Israel. And they did indeed come up with something. According to the late and unlamented Yasser Arafat, the most important weapon of the Arabs is the "Arab womb," the motto being: "If we can't defeat them in war, let's outbreed them." And that is exactly what would happen if there ever were a "binational" state. There can be little doubt that, within a generation or less, the Arabs would have outbred their Jewish fellow citizens and would have become the majority in the country. They would thus have accomplished what they were unable to attain by any other means, namely the destruction of the Jewish state.

Artificial countries: With the exception of Egypt, all the countries of the Middle East are artificial creations. After World War I, England and France carved up the Ottoman Empire, with England retaining what are now Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel and Iraq, and France being in possession of what are now Syria and Lebanon.

In 1917, the Balfour Declaration, proclaimed by the British mandatory power, established all of Palestine – east and west of the Jordan River – as the reconstituted homeland for the Jewish people. This was ratified by the 52 countries of the League of Nations. Insistence that these are Arab lands and that the Jews are "occupiers" is a notion that is fairly new. But it has been repeated so often and for so long that most of the world has come to believe it. But it has no basis in fact at all. It is a myth.

If Israel were ever to consent to the creation of a binational state, how would it work out? To get the answer, one only needs to go next door to Lebanon. In order to provide a safe haven for the Maronite Christians, the French carved out the artificial state of Lebanon. Within just one generation, the population ratio had begun to change in favor of the Muslims. Strife broke out, which ultimately culminated in a bloody civil war that lasted for close to ten years and in which scores of thousands died. Can anybody really believe that, given the mortal hatred of the Muslims against the Jews, things would be any different in Israel/Palestine? Of course not! A bloody civil war would be the inevitable result.

Created as a Jewish state: Israel was created as a Jewish state by the will of the nations of the world and by the brain and brawn of the Jewish people. There is no reason why the Israelis would turn their country over to those who are their declared mortal enemies. Do the Turks plan to establish a binational state with the Kurds (or do the Iranians or Iraqis, for that matter)? Do the Spaniards consider a binational state with the Basques? Do the Chinese propose the formation of a binational state with the Tibetans? Of course not. Why, therefore, should Israel even consider sharing its country with those whose never-changing agenda is its destruction? Why should Israel, one of the most advanced countries in the world in virtually every field of endeavor, make itself hostage to those who live in backwardness and ignorance and who are guided by religious fanaticism? Israel was founded to be the Jewish homeland and it will never acquiesce to its own destruction by allowing itself to become a binational state.

A binational state is a non-starter and, realistically, a Palestinian state in any portion of Judea/Samaria and Gaza (even in the unlikely case that the Israelis were ever willing to concede it) would not be viable. What then is the possible solution to this enduring problem? The Palestinians, just as the over one million Arabs now living in Israel with full rights as citizens, could be part of Israel, with full autonomy and with their own internal governance (something that the Kurds would give anything to attain). If they were unhappy with that solution they would be at liberty to migrate to any of the over twenty Arab countries that, one would hope, would welcome them with open arms.

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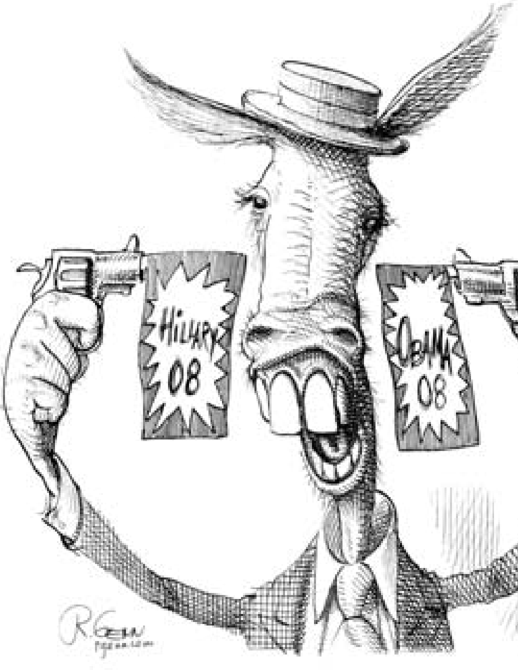
they are now in shock at having these charges hurled back at them from within their own family, and in denial about the extent to which they may be guilty as charged. A campaign in which a feminist trail-blazer is called a racist by a post-racial healer who indulges a racist Bible thumper is a little too strange for their minds to keep up with, but it is the long-term result of the world they created. They never dreamed that the "diversity" codes they cooked up could snap back and attack them. But they could, and they have.

WHEN YOU CALL ME THAT, SMILE

Earlier in the primary season, Sen. Joe Biden had tried to compliment Obama by calling him "clean" and "articulate," words that in the Democrats' looking-glass world were immediately denounced as condescending, implying that other non-whites were assumed to be neither. This was, of course, not what Biden intended, and seemed almost enough to make him go back to lifting words from Neil Kinnock and Robert F. Kennedy.

When Wright's rants surfaced, the liberals' first move was to claim they meant nothing at all. "Obama . . . deserves to be judged on his own terms, and not by the ravings of an angry preacher," E. J. Dionne protested. Democrat Donna Brazile wrote in her column, "Seriously, I would hope the rejection of Obama is not based on the color of his skin or his past association with a down-to-earth, wild-eyed preacher man who was 'just like family.' I would find it absolutely horrifying that we would hold Obama to a standard that is rarely applied to others."

But in fact, this standard has been applied all the time—to cripple Republicans. In 2006 John McCain mended fences with the Rev. Jerry Falwell and was assailed by the Left for meeting with a man who a few days after September 11, 2001, had called the terrorist attacks God's vengeance for moral transgressions. In 2000 George W. Bush addressed a crowd at Bob Jones University—a fundamentalist school that had until recently banned cross-racial dating—and was badgered incessantly to disavow all its policies. Democrats in the House and Senate introduced a resolution condemning not only the college, but any candidate who had ever set foot on its grounds. A year later, Bob Herbert of the *New York Times* was still at it: "George W. Bush could have distanced himself from such venues, but he chose not to. Mr. Bush has dismayed many millions of Americans . . . who have tried hard to move away from the corrosive policies and customs of the past."



ROMAN GENN

Dionne compared Wright to Martin Luther King Jr., whom he described as "another angry black preacher" who had harsh words for many American policies. All true, but King never called upon God to damn his own country, railed against Israel, used ethnic slurs against other people, or accused his nation of genocide. And King lived in a country in which segregation was legal, civil-rights workers were beaten and murdered, and the National Guard had to help James Meredith enroll at Ole Miss. Wright lives in a country in which a statue of Meredith now stands on the campus, two black secretaries of state have been named by a conservative president, and one of Wright's flock stands a good chance of becoming the president.

One way to avoid being condemned as a racist is to project one's own charges onto someone else. Billy Shaheen—the husband of Jeanne Shaheen, former New Hampshire governor—warned the *Washington Post* that the unvetted Obama would be a tabula rasa on which evil conservatives would scrawl ugly things. "The Republicans are not going to give up without a fight . . . and one of the things they're certainly going to jump on is his drug use. . . . It'll be, 'When was the last time? Did you ever give drugs to anyone? Did you sell them to anyone?' . . . There are so many openings for Republican dirty tricks."

In similar fashion, on April 18 the Huffington Post reported that Rick Sloan, a union official who backs Hillary Clinton, had sent a mailing to 40 key unions called "What Is Rove Up To?" The memo detailed a projected campaign by Karl Rove, the former George W. Bush adviser, based on Obama's connections to both Reverend Wright and Bill Ayers. "The drip, drip, drip of Republican opposition research will continue throughout the summer," Sloan frothed. "Speakers will joke about a color spectrum of light pink to deep red. . . . The bombing of the U.S. Capitol, the Pentagon, and the U.S. State Department will serve as b-roll for his television ads that will have one final visual, as the announcer gravely intones, 'Their Change—Not What You Had In Mind.'"

And as Sloan channeled Rove and Shaheen lamented in fulsome detail the criminal things about to be done by the Republicans, Paul Waldman at *The American Prospect* was whipping himself into a frenzy over a supposed conservative "hate-based campaign against Obama." "They intend, as they have so many times before, to wage a campaign appealing to the ugliest prejudices, the most craven fears, the most vile hatreds," Waldman assured us. "They will make sure white Americans know that Obama is not Tiger Woods. He's not the unthreatening black man, he's the scary black man. He's Al Sharpton, he's Malcolm X, he's Huey Newton. He'll throw grievance in your face, make you feel guilty, and who knows, maybe kill you and rape your wife."

There are, in fact, many examples of recourse to fears and prejudice that Waldman could have cited, but he ignored them, since they were all committed by Democrats. Barbed praise is one favorite tactic. Bob Kerrey, the former Nebraska governor and senator, said after endorsing Hillary Clinton, "I like the fact that his name is Barack Hussein Obama, and that his father was a Muslim, and that his paternal grandmother is a Muslim. There's a billion people on the planet that are Muslims, and I think that experience is a big deal." Another method is pious disavowal: "The issue related to cocaine is not something that the campaign is in any way raising," said Mark Penn, then Clinton's chief strategist.

Others abandoned all dissimulation. In an allusion to Obama's drug use, Robert Johnson, the founder of Black Entertainment Television, while introducing Hillary Clinton at a campaign stop, said, "Hillary and Bill Clinton . . . have been deeply and emotionally involved in black issues since Barack Obama was doing something in the neighborhood—and I won't say what he was doing, but he said it in the book." Another Clinton backer, New York attorney general Andrew Cuomo (the son of the former governor and liberal idol Mario Cuomo), said, "It's not a TV-crazed race. . . . You can't just buy your way through. . . . You can't shuck and jive at a press conference." ("Shuck and jive" is an old, disparaging term that describes efforts by blacks to finagle their way out of trouble.)

CLING STATIC

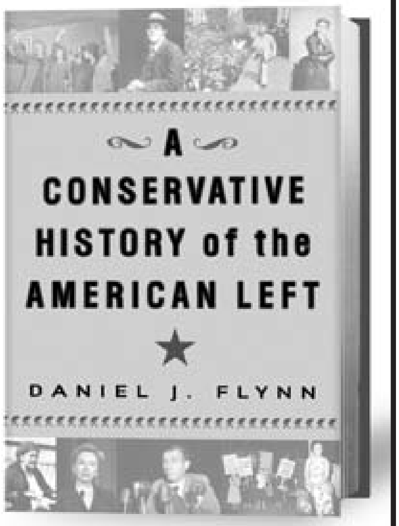
Democrats were further taken aback when Obama, at a posh Left Coast soirée, dumped on a whole class of sought-after voters, explaining that they clung to their guns and religion from despair at their own dreary lives. In sensitivity terms, this was a no-no, except that the group he had patronized—white, small-town, and poor—was one of the few not often blessed by "diversity" coverage. "Who gave *them* the idea that *they* could be touchy?" one imagines Democrats thinking.

And who gave another Democrat—an Inconvenient Woman, if ever there was one—the idea that she could join the conservatives in picking this up? Hillary strategist Geoffrey Garin continued the Republican-blaming attacks in an interview with Greg Sargent of Talking Points Memo. According to Sargent, Garin "dramatically raised the stakes in the battle over Barack Obama's comments about small-town America, saying in an interview they would be 'damaging' to him in a general election . . . and should be something that super delegates consider when deciding whom to support. . . . Asked if Obama's comments would pop up in an ad, Garin said it was too soon to tell, but added . . . 'I completely think it's fair game.'" This set off fireworks at the Stump, a *New Republic* blog, where Noam Scheiber exploded, "My response, in case it needs to be spelled out: Yes, all this might be fair game . . . . IF OBAMA WEREN'T OVERWHELMINGLY LIKELY TO BE THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE!!!"

So there it all is. In medical terms, an auto-immune disorder is a disease in which the body's immune system, which guards against infection by external forces, is turned by mistake on the body's own tissues and starts tearing them apart. Democrats have spent the last 30-odd years crafting a useful collection of theories and tactics: Everyone is part of a group, and every group is a victim; association is guilt, and stray words are nooses; "insensitivity," in the eye of the victim, is the worst of all possible crimes. But these were meant to be used against outside invaders—sexist white males and their enablers—and not against their own tribe. It worked well enough when all good liberals could focus their wrath on the reigning Great Satan—Reagan, both Bushes, Newt Gingrich, John McCain, whomever—but then the party's two lead groups of victims faced off against each other, and everything went tragically wrong. They are trying to stop now, but it's too late. Neither side will surrender its status as the ultimate victim. No one will stop seeing a personal loss as a wider assault on all non-whites or all women. No one will stop calling the others unfair.

Meanwhile, they accuse fellow Democrats of prejudice, attack ex-friends in terms they once applied only to conservatives, and swear they will never forget such injustice. "Clinton's methodical, dogged history of work for the Democratic Party is treated just like the methodical, dogged histories of so many women," whines the syndicated columnist Marie Cocco. The durable leftist Nora Ephron calls all Democrats bigots, since a vote for Obama means that one hates women, while a vote for Clinton means that one hates blacks. "Would they like a white man instead of a black man?" asks Marion Wagner, a NOW official, of fellow primary voters. "Of course. But they'll take a black man over a woman. I never thought, in 2008, that we'd still be dealing with this." In other words, the party is so sexist that it's willing to put its racism aside, just to wreck things for women. Is this a great country, or what? **NR**

MEET THE NEW HOPE, SAME AS THE OLD HOPE



As Democrats promise a "new" politics of hope and change, author Daniel J. Flynn exposes **the troubling history they'd rather ignore—** a history in which these same schemes have failed many times before.

This groundbreaking book reveals the destructiveness of the Left's undying pursuit of their unattainable dreams.

"A tour de force."

—PETER SCHWEIZER, bestselling author of *Do As I Say (Not As I Do)*

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■ **AT WAR**

After Gitmo

We urgently need a new system for War on Terror detainees

ANDREW C. McCARTHY

THESE are dark days for prosecution of the War on Terror. The troop surge has routed al-Qaeda in Baghdad, and the measurable security improvement gives hope for stable political arrangements. Yet whether an American ally will emerge from such a settlement, if it happens, is highly questionable, and our satisfaction over the denial of a safe haven to al-Qaeda in its former Iraqi redoubts is tempered by the jihadist resurgence in Pakistan's lawless northwest border region.

It is at home, however, that the war—the very need to prosecute it as a war—is truly besieged. No issue makes that clearer than Guantanamo Bay. The brute fact is that, regardless of who is elected president in November, the naval base's days as a detention center are numbered.

Camp Delta, the Gitmo facility where our armed forces still hold about 350 alien enemy combatants, is probably the most scrutinized prison in modern history. It is also among the most humane, complete with halal meals, a bursting library, lush recreation facilities, communal prayer breaks, and even white-gloved U.S. soldiers—Muslims only, please—delivering to each detainee a Koran (U.S. government–issued, even though the inmates believe it commands them to kill Americans). The popular narrative portraying the facility as a rampant human-rights violator is a slander (unless one accounts for the assaults by jihadists against the MPs who guard them). Gitmo has produced mostly actionable intelligence, enabling analysts to identify terrorists, map their networks, trace their funding channels, and save American and European lives.

The narrative, however, endures. Gitmo is totemic of the post-9/11 determination to treat the international jihadist threat as a war rather than a series of mere crimes. It is the law of war in action. That venerable code, in stark contrast to civilian judicial procedures, holds that captives may be detained indefinitely without trial—both to glean intelligence and to deplete enemy resources, purposes that tend toward the civilized goal of a faster end to war's miseries. But as an emblem of the war paradigm, Gitmo is the hottest of hot buttons for an angry, post-sovereign Left—the transnational progressives who insist that there is no war at all, that international terrorists pose a nuisance fit for management by civilian courts, and that, in any event, America has only itself to blame for an onslaught by disgruntled Muslims.

Mr. McCarthy, a former federal prosecutor, is the author of *Willful Blindness: A Memoir of the Jihad,* and director of the Center for Law & Counterterrorism at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

A FAILURE OF COMMUNICATION

Even as it has defended Gitmo, the communications-challenged Bush administration has failed to make the public case that its wartime detention policy has been an intelligence coup. Instead, fretting over "our reputation in the world" (primarily in tyrannical Muslim countries and European nanny states that swoon over human rights while abdicating responsibility for their own defense), Condoleezza Rice and Robert Gates have pushed for closure. Not to be outdone, Colin Powell declares that the place should have been shut down "yesterday." Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, embroiled in a down-to-the-wire nomination contest, have naturally adopted the Gitmo Gospel according to MoveOn.org. Most dismaying, however, is the presumptive Republican nominee. Castigating Gitmo and linking it rhetorically with improper interrogation tactics and prisoner abuse (controversies that actually center on CIA "black sites" and Abu Ghraib, not Gitmo) is not enough for John McCain; he insists he "would announce that we were closing Guantanamo Bay and moving those prisoners to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas."

For his part, President Bush has repeatedly said he would like to close Gitmo but cannot responsibly do so without a Plan B. And therein lies the quandary. It has been nearly seven years since the commencement of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan. It has been apparent for nearly as long that our current approach is unsustainable, that we desperately need a new system for detaining and trying captured terrorists in a war that will continue for decades. Yet we are still without Plan B.

Gitmo, the Left claims, is a "legal black hole." To be sure, the whole point of establishing a detention center on sovereign Cuban territory, outside the jurisdiction of the U.S. courts, was to avoid the judicial usurpation of a key aspect of war-fighting. That was entirely consistent with jurisprudence that has recognized broad executive discretion regarding the detention and trial of enemy combatants. In point of fact, while the courts have occasionally pulled the rug out from under the administration (for example, finding, under a dubious de facto–control analysis, that Gitmo is American territory and thus subject to judicial intrusion after all), the core problems with Gitmo are political, not legal.

In 2004, the Supreme Court reaffirmed that enemy operatives—including traitorous American citizens—may be detained without trial, as millions of war prisoners have been throughout our history. In 2006, even as it invalidated the military-commission trials authorized by the president, the Court indicated that such tribunals would pass muster if given legislative imprimatur. Congress promptly enacted the Military Commissions Act (MCA), which paved the way for commission trials and detention proceedings (called Combatant Status Review Tribunals, or CSRTs) to proceed, with a significant innovation: After appeals were exhausted in the military justice system, combatants would be permitted to seek review in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit (and, ultimately, the Supreme Court)—the first time in history that enemy prisoners have been given systematic access to American civilian courts.

As a matter of law, then, Gitmo seems to be on solid footing. That could change drastically. We are awaiting a decision in the Supreme Court's most important case of this term, *Boumediene v. Bush*, in which alien combatants are claiming U.S. constitu-

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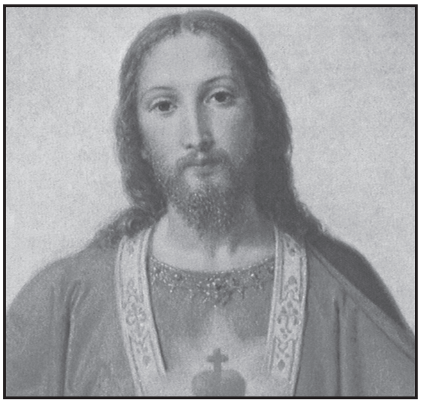

Illustration of Jesus

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About Your Professor

Dr. Bart D. Ehrman is the James A. Gray Professor and Chair of the Department of Religion at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The author or editor of 17 books, he has received many awards and prizes during his tenure at UNC including the Bowman and Gordon Gray Award for excellence in teaching.

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tional rights—first, habeas corpus (the premise for claiming that, despite the MCA, military tribunals are inadequate) and, ultimately, the same full-blown trial rights enjoyed by the American citizens they are trying to kill. It was the Supreme Court, however, that besought Congress to intervene in the detainee thicket. Congress having obliged, one hopes the Court will respect its resolution—particularly when, in the unlikely event that the system's multiple layers of military and civilian appeals yield unjust results, the justices would be able to address those on a case-by-case basis.

No, Gitmo's demise is driven by politics, domestic and international.

NEW WAR, NEW COMBATANTS

Much of the explanation is cultural. Modern American society is deeply influenced by legal elites. It is made uncomfortable by the specter of potential innocents being held for years without having their day in court. And potential innocence is inherent in the ambiguity that haunts this new kind of war.

For the most part, prior conflicts involved *honorable* enemy combatants: soldiers who hewed to the laws of war. They wore uniforms, carried their weapons openly, and generally refrained from targeting civilians. To the contrary, our current enemies blend into the civilian populations they target for sneak attacks. It is counterintuitive—and, from a broad perspective, unjust—to reward their barbarism with legal rights that are never extended to honorable combatants. Yet, as a practical matter, unless caught *in flagrante delicto*, the unlawful-combatant terrorist presents doubt about whether he is really a terrorist—unlike, say, the captured Nazi soldier, who was unmistakably clad and fighting as such.

The public's immediate post-9/11 ardor has ebbed, as it was sure to do. We don't like terrorists any better, but as the atrocities recede in our memory, we are naturally more sympathetic to the plight of the captive: claiming his innocence yet jailed indefinitely, with no prospect of compelling the government to justify his detention. His claims may be implausible, but the press dutifully reports them, frequently without the damning facts that would undermine them. Witness the case of Canadian jihadist Omar Khadr, tirelessly described as a frightened teenage detainee, with scant mention of the American medic he killed and the others he maimed by tossing a grenade at them on the battlefield.

Of course, our standard mechanism for resolving doubt is the judicial trial. Gitmo critics argue that we successfully tried terrorists in the federal courts throughout the 1990s and should do so again. It's a proven formula to which, they maintain, we should return.

Despite its surface appeal, this contention is a hanging curveball that by now should have been slammed out of the park. While I am very proud to have prosecuted terrorists in the 1990s, the strategy can be considered a success only if one's chief preoccupation is due process. Viewed through the prism of national security, the effort was an abysmal failure.

Yes, every apprehended terrorist was convicted. In eight years, however, only 29 operatives, most of them low-level, were captured and tried. Between the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993 and its destruction on 9/11, American targets were plotted against and attacked with increasing audacity by an enemy that was growing ever larger. But because of the criminal justice system's high evidentiary hurdles and procedural rigor, it could not have handled many more cases than the paltry number it processed—cases that invariably took years to complete, at a cost of untold millions (including the expense of securing courthouses, holding facilities, and trial participants). When one considers that we've frequently taken out more than 29 terrorists in a single day of combat since 9/11, it becomes easier to see the weaknesses of the justice system as a counterterrorism tool—and to understand how we've avoided a reprise of 9/11.

FROM THE HOUSETOPS

The terrorism prosecutions, furthermore, were an intelligence banquet for radical Islam. The imperative of neutralizing terrorists who are sure to kill again if acquitted induces prosecutors to charge their cases broadly, maximizing the admissibility of damaging evidence. Broad charges, however, translate into bottomless obligations to disclose sensitive information in the government's files—to say nothing of the trial itself, at which top informants and valuable surveillance efforts are exposed, rendering them useless for future intelligence-gathering. Even if al-Qaeda had somehow managed to develop a spy agency, it could never have come close to acquiring the trove of intelligence we provided gratis through our prosecutions.

The biggest factor making civilian trials untenable, though, is that the most important evidence is almost always inadmissible by its very nature. Much of the information that shows how Americans are imperiled by the Gitmo detainees comes from two sources: interrogations and intelligence from foreign services (our own intelligence assets being appallingly poor in places where the threat to us is gravest). No matter how reliable they may be, the fruits of Gitmo interrogations would be inadmissible in civilian criminal trials—not because of "torture," as the demagogues are quick to assume, but because this information was not elicited with *Miranda* protections, such as the assistance of taxpayer-funded lawyers. Similarly, foreign intelligence cannot be used in court, however great our confidence in its accuracy. It generally comes to us as hearsay (reports of what sources said, not testimony from the sources themselves), provided on the assurance that it will not be exposed publicly—an assurance whose betrayal would be the death of cooperation from countries that have the eyes and ears we lack.

This explains why it was anticipated that only a small fraction of the Gitmo detainees—less, probably significantly less, than 20 percent—would ever face commission trials for war crimes. A war is not a crime wave. Protecting a nation entails neutralizing many more hostile actors than can be proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in military trials, let alone civilian trials. Even with the military's relaxed due-process requirements, it has always been obvious that many more captives would be held than tried.

The law of war allows for incapacitating dangerous operatives based on the commander in chief's assessment of classified or inadmissible intelligence. The criminal justice system does not; defendants must be tried. Unlike democracies such as Israel and Great Britain, with their histories of confronting international terrorism, the U.S. does not permit even limited preventive detention outside of war. If the Gitmo detainees are no longer deemed alien enemy combatants, if Plan B becomes civilian prosecution, then most of them will have to be released, regardless of how much danger they pose.

Civilian criminal prosecution, then, is a non-starter. Once made aware of its downsides, the American public is likely to accept something with less-elaborate due process, provided the outcomes have integrity. We want to be confident that we are not indefinitely detaining innocent people, and we'll accept the military system if it is shown to work and inspire that confidence.

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

The problem with the military system lies in international politics. The fact that such tribunals—whether CSRTs or commission trials—pass muster under American legal principles is cold comfort. Like it or not, if we are to keep radical Islam on the defensive, we need the enthusiastic cooperation of other nations. Those nations, especially in Europe, have decided that Guantanamo Bay flouts Western values because military tribunals are bereft of an independent judicial check—besides bringing charges, the executive branch is judge, jury, and jailer/executioner.

They are wrong, of course. The military justice system is an honorable one, superior to the justice systems of many American states—to say nothing of other countries. Indeed, lawyers quip that while the guilty are better-off in the civilian system, an innocent has a better shot at acquittal in a military court. And even if that were not the case, the MCA, as noted above, does provide for civilian-court review. No matter. International opinion, especially in Europe, snickers that Gitmo justice is a unilateral executive-branch show where even the death penalty, that bane of bien-pensant existence, can be imposed without judicial oversight.

International Gitmo-paranoia is driven by Bush Derangement Syndrome, infecting countries that, truth be told, are singularly unhelpful at moving prisoners out of Camp Delta despite their carping about its existence. We cannot, however, afford to ignore this particular tantrum. If we cannot try terrorists in our custody, we will need foreign cooperation in relocating them. More important, most jihadists who threaten America will continue to do so from overseas. If we do not have a system to which foreign countries are willing to extradite terrorists, we will effectively have outsourced our national security to toothless nations that are far less interested in it than we are.

The War on Terror does not readily fit either the military or the civilian judicial paradigm. It is a novel conflict that calls for a novel solution. The best one would be a special national-security court, a brand-new system specifically designed to have jurisdiction over important legal components attendant to the war.

For detention and trial, such a system would borrow heavily from military procedures, which allow for narrow charges, less onerous discovery requirements, the protection of national-defense information, and extensive questioning of detainees prior to the assignment of counsel (since once counsel enters a case, interrogation ends—something we can afford in the criminal justice system, where the goal is prosecution, but not in wartime detention, where the goal is intelligence). The proceedings, however, would be presided over by federal judges, not military judges.

Conservatives instinctively recoil at the thought of expanding the judicial reach, but this is an expansion that makes sense, because it involves what judges do singularly well, and what the military has proved unable to do—namely, move proceedings along to their conclusion. An independent judicial check will quell our allies' squawking and make the system acceptable to them. The danger, of course, is that judges might make up the law as they go along, naturally ratcheting up due-process requirements because they are trained for the task of providing justice, not balancing due process with the demands of national security. Congress, however, can avoid that pitfall by writing exacting rules for national-security-court proceedings and installing a presumption against judicial legislating.

Our lawmakers, unfortunately, have shown little stomach for this task. The burden of drafting procedural rules would make them accountable: They would have to say what rights they believe accused terrorists should be granted and what rights they should be denied. That process would be fraught with political risk. It's easier to let the president, the military, and the courts wrestle with the nuts and bolts of detainee cases. Meanwhile Congress grandstands over interrogation methods, confinement conditions, and legal procedures but avoids offering an alternative.

The time for abdicating responsibility is over. Gitmo will surely be closed, and soon. But the problem of what to do—now and in the future—with captured terrorists who mean the American people severe harm is not going away. Working together, the political branches responsible for our security can design a new justice system that meets the unprecedented challenges of this war. If they default, the judiciary—the politically insulated branch with no national-security mandate—will dictate due-process standards ad hoc. And in very short order, we will be back to the 1990s, relying on civilian court procedures to protect us—with the same results. **NR**

International Gitmo-paranoia is driven by Bush Derangement Syndrome, infecting countries that, truth be told, are singularly unhelpful at moving prisoners out of Camp Delta despite their carping about its existence.

ESSAY

Inside Story

The truth about consciousness continues to elude us

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

CAN there be a science of mind? There has of course been a philosophy of mind since the time of the ancients, but is this really an area that the scientific method can penetrate? A growing number of academics from several disciplines are betting that it is. Hoping to find out whether or not they are right, I attended the eighth biennial "Toward a Science of Consciousness" conference hosted by the University of Arizona at Tucson this April. This was a multidisciplinary gathering of about 800 scholars from a wide range of fields. Best represented were neuroscience, philosophy, psychology, and physics. Mingling among us were representatives from anthropology, sociology, theology, ethical and legal studies, and even "literature and hermeneutics."

My conclusion, after a week of lectures and discussions: Yes, there are probably new truths we can establish, and some age-old problems we may be able to resolve. On the evidence so far, though—and to be sure, the evidence is still thin and patchy—we shall not like what we learn.

TIME OUT OF MIND

When psychology began to organize itself in the later 19th century it was taken for granted that the answer to my opening question was "Yes." Early psychologists, including the great William James, bent their efforts to the study of our inner mental life, our sensations and experiences, from the merely physical to the spiritual. The article on psychology in the 1911 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, written by pioneering British psychologist James Ward, declares flatly that "psychology . . . is the science of individual experience."

Unfortunately my individual mental experiences are accessible to nobody but me, while a key feature of scientific method is scrutiny of data by several different, independent observers. This conundrum, and distaste for the imaginative but data-light and largely untestable theories of Freud, soon brought on a reaction: the era of behaviorism. John B. Watson, the great champion of that school, famously said in 1913 that "introspection forms no essential part" of psychology's methods. Only behavior could be independently observed; only behavior could furnish objective data. Psychology became the only science to rule out of bounds its nominal subject matter: the psyche, the mind.

Interest in subjective experiences is hard to suppress, though. In the 1950s the barrenness of behaviorism, along with the emergence of computer science and studies of brain-damaged WWII veterans, led to new ways of thinking about thinking. Then, from the late 1970s, techniques for imaging brain activity were developed. In 1990 came the best of those techniques, "functional magnetic resonance imaging" (fMRI), which maps tiny changes in blood flow from less-busy to more-busy regions of the brain. With fMRI we can *watch the brain thinking*. Now, when a subject reports some inner experience, we can see the corresponding brain activity—the "neural correlates of consciousness."

The development of fMRI was a major stimulus to the birth of a new field: consciousness studies. *The Journal of Consciousness Studies* was founded in 1994. Also in that year was organized the first of these biennial "Toward a Science of Consciousness" conferences. That "toward" indicates a proper humility about the proceedings. Most of the participants would, I think, agree with me that the answer to my opening question is yes, a science of mind is possible. We don't have one yet, though, only overlapping interest from several long-established academic disciplines and a handful of suggestive, mostly rather disturbing, experimental results.

NEW DEPARTURES

The disciplines most prominently on display at Tucson were neuroscience and philosophy. These two fields had collided quite sensationally in 1985, when Benjamin Libet published his discovery that the subjective experience of willing an act is *preceded* by the brain activities required to initiate the act. The measured gap between unconscious initiation and conscious decision-making was less than a second in Libet's experiments, but later researchers have since pushed it back to seven seconds.

Seven seconds! Your brain starts up the neural processes necessary for you to push a button. *Seven seconds later* you experience the wish to push that button. You then push the button. Where is free will? Where Schopenhauer left it, perhaps. Loosely translated: "We can do what we want, but we can't *want* what we want."

Libet himself died last year. (Signing up for the conference a few weeks ago, I misread the program as saying that Libet would be giving an address. Now *that* would have been a breakthrough in consciousness studies!) His results have generated an enormous and contentious literature. There is a good, though early, discussion in Chapter 6 of Daniel Dennett's 1991 book *Consciousness Explained*.

We heard the latest news from four different researchers on the conference's second day. Psychologist William Banks suggested that conscious volition may be just a tale we tell ourselves after the event, and wondered aloud if our precious consciousnesses are "dragged through life by zombies." Neuroscientist Francesca Carota described her extension of Libet's experiments from button-pressing to speaking. Philosopher John Jacobson told us about his computer program to play rock-paper-scissors. It is unbeatable; and, by dint of a subtle illusion, the computer appears to move before its human opponent.

Jacobson raised some questions about the legal implications of all this research. Our laws, he pointed out, are based on the notion that I first consciously decide to do a thing, then I up and do it. If these new results stand, it seems that this "folk volition" is as far from the truth as the folk-astronomical idea of the sky as a crystal dome. What then happens to our laws? What happens to ethics, to responsibility?

The fourth speaker was physicist Daniel Sheehan, who tried to embed Libet's weird results in the deeper weirdness of quantum mechanics. The idea that the truth about consciousness may lie in the subatomic realm has been around for some years, its best-known promoters being British mathematical physicist Roger Penrose (*The Emperor's New Mind*, 1989) and Arizona's own Stuart Hameroff, organizer of this very conference. There have always been knotty problems of causation down at the quantum level, and Sheehan wondered whether Libet's results might be evidence for "retrocausation"—time flowing backwards. He had shown sequences of images to his subjects, some images emotionally "cold" (landscape), some "hot" (naked woman). Watching the corresponding brain activity, he claimed to have recorded a flutter of unusual interest *before* a "hot" picture was shown. Presentiment, or retrocausation?

(In a later session, when parapsychologist Dick Bierman mentioned Sheehan's presentiment results, I asked why someone hadn't tried to "fool" the effect. While showing that sequence of "hot" and "cold" pictures to a subject, on observing an interest flutter just before presentation of a "hot" picture, find out what happens if you then *don't show the picture*. Bierman, a phlegmatic Dutchman with a weightlifter's physique and a streak of wry humor, said he had suggested this to a colleague, but the colleague had said, presumably in jest: "If we do that, the universe might collapse!")

After all this metaphysics we got a splash of cold water from another physicist, Sue Pockett of the University of Auckland, New Zealand. She pooh-poohed Sheehan's "retrocausation" on statistical grounds—sound ones, it seemed to me. She gave less-weird interpretations of common quantum paradoxes. She said Libet had made "unjustified assumptions." Pockett's was a star turn. The audience loved her. The previous speakers did their best to defend themselves, and some scholarly tag wrestling broke out. Hadn't X and Y made these arguments against Libet years ago? And hadn't he responded fully? Yes, but P and Q had pointed out that . . . etc., etc. This was great academic theater. I wonder if there isn't a reality-TV show to be made.

In conversation with Sue Pockett later, I remarked on the odd fact that, speaking very generally, antipodeans seem determined to live up to their stereotype as down-to-earth, no-nonsense debunkers of all theories straying too far from everyday experience. A certain Monty Python sketch comes to mind. There is actually a school of metaphysics called "Australian materialism" that argues that the mind simply *is* the brain, no further explanation required. One of the main originators of this school has a crisply reductionist name: Jack Smart. I asked Dr. Pockett what accounted for this vein of antipodean skepticism. She gave me a deliciously New Zealandish answer: "There are a lot of sheep out here, and they need sheepdogs to keep 'em in order. I'm a sheepdog."

THE ORIGIN OF MIND

The troubling thoughts raised by Libet and his followers were

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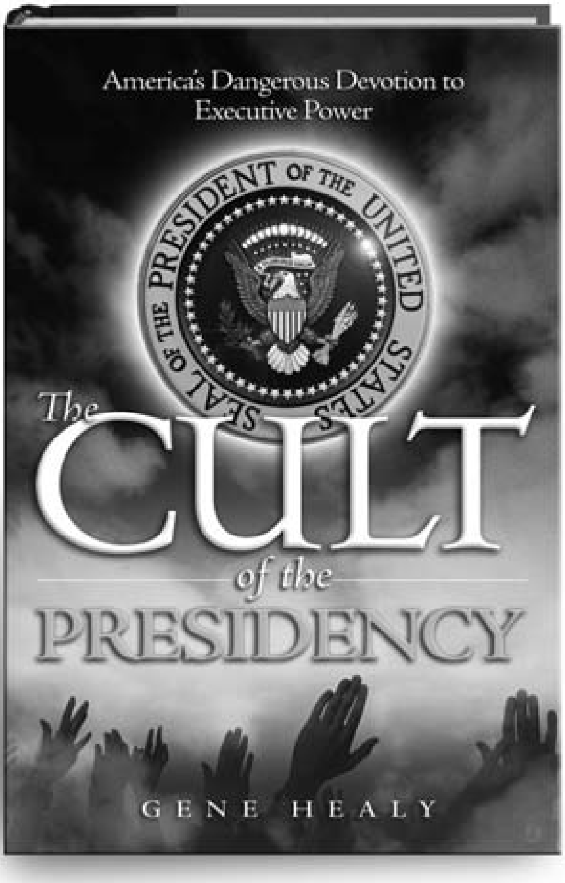
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relieved with another cold splash from some speakers on the reporting and recording of conscious states. There is, I was surprised to learn, no general agreement among experts about how much conscious experience we have. Are we conscious of a lot of things all the time, as early psychologists like William James believed? Or is our consciousness really a very occasional thing, most of our mentation being transitory thoughts and feelings immediately forgotten—what Virginia Woolf called the “cotton wool” of mental life? As philosopher Eric Schwitzgebel told us, we can’t work up a general theory of consciousness until this preliminary matter is settled.

How can we settle it? The most popular technique employs beepers. You give beepers to your subjects, then send them out to live their lives. At random times through the day, you beep them. They must record exactly what, if anything, they were conscious of in the instant before the beeper sounded. The results are sometimes disconcerting. Developmental psychologist Sarah Akhter of the University of Nevada used beepers to explore the consciousness of adolescents. (Consciousness-studies researchers know no fear.) One bright, normal 12-year-old female subject seemed to have no inner life at all. As the father of a teenage girl, I was not as shaken by this finding as perhaps I should have been.

Also open is the question of when consciousness first showed up. I was surprised again to learn that the theories of the late Julian Jaynes still have some currency. In his 1976 bestseller, *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*, Jaynes had argued that consciousness did not appear until historic times, and that the earliest people who left us any account of their inner lives had no executive consciousness as we understand it. Their decision-making was driven not by conscious volition, but by auditory hallucinations. We describe our own acts in terms like: “I’d made up my mind to do it, so I did it.” In Bronze Age texts like the *Iliad* or early books of the Old Testament, wrote Jaynes, matters more often proceed along lines like: “A god told him to do it, so he did it.”

Free men following the dictates of reason? Has that ever really been a full picture of our political life?

I read Jaynes’s book when it came out. It occurred to me at the time, as it did to many reviewers, that his theories ought to be easy to test, since pre-modern peoples can still be found in remote parts of the world. Folk of not merely the Bronze Age, but the actual Stone Age, are still among us. Why had not Jaynes done some testing on them to confirm his theories? I put this question to philosopher Jan Sleutels of Leiden University. “Because it would not have been politically correct!” Sleutels replied with a chuckle. It is apparently a gross breach of etiquette to suggest that naked head-hunters have thought processes in any way different from ours.

Be that as it may, fMRI research seems to confirm some of Jaynes’s ideas, and Jaynesian psychology is enjoying a revival. This is another unsettling thing to learn. If the earliest human civilizations were built by people obeying voices in their heads, without anything we would consider reflective consciousness, then . . . do we really need reflective consciousness?

A dilettante outsider is at a disadvantage in gatherings like the one in Tucson, among people who have spent years, sometimes decades, in the fields. They have a disconcerting tendency to speak to one another in allusions and abbreviations, and you have to try to catch the jargon as it flies by: the Cartesian Theater, the Chinese Room, Leibniz’s Mill, NCC (that is those “neural correlates of consciousness”), and GWT (Global Workspace Theory, a popular account of the interactions between conscious and unconscious brain processes). I came away from the conference with a long reading list.

The breadth of the field is astonishing, as I hope I have illustrated. From child-development psychology to metaphysics; from quantum mechanics to epistemology; from evolutionary biology to the mental states of Achilles and Elijah. I don’t know how anyone with an active intellect could not be fascinated by consciousness studies.

There are issues of large general consequence here, too. After sitting through a dozen hours or so of these lectures and debates, you begin to get an uncomfortable feeling of the ground shifting beneath you. I have mentioned John Jacobson’s remarks on the ethical and legal issues. Our nation—it would not be too much to say our civilization—is founded on Enlightenment ideals about free men following the dictates of reason. What if our freedom is an illusion, as Libet’s results suggest? Psychologist Richard Nisbett (not present at Tucson) has studied the reasons people give for their actions, and found that “for a shocking range of things, we don’t know the answer to ‘Why did I?’ any better than an observer.” So perhaps reason, like freedom, is an illusion.

Or it may be that acknowledging these illusions for what they are will only be to state openly what many have long suspected. While attending the conference, I happened to read about a Pew Research Center poll done in late March, finding that voters are supporting Barack Obama because he makes them feel good about themselves. Free men following the dictates of reason? Has that ever really been a full picture of our political life?

How far do we still have to go “toward a science of consciousness”? A long way yet, was my parting impression. In his 2007 Teaching Company lecture series *Consciousness and Its Implications* (which I recommend), philosopher Daniel Robinson remarks: “Despite the tremendous growth of knowledge over recent decades, the problem of mental causation . . . is pretty much where it was in the time of the ancient Greek philosophers.” That matches my own conclusions from the Tucson meeting. Given the explosive implications of some of this work, perhaps it would not be obscurantist to hope that Robinson’s judgment will remain true for a while longer. **NR**

the long view

ROB LONG

Official Transcript *Larry King Live*, July 29, 2008

LARRY KING: "Tomorrow night! The whole hour with Bonnie Franklin! From West Memphis, Arkansas, hello!"

CALLER: "Hi, Larry."

LARRY KING: "What's your question?"

CALLER: "I just want to know from Senator Clinton how she's doing with the grieving process."

LARRY KING: "Good question. How about it. How's the healing? Are you there, not there, almost there?"

HILLARY CLINTON: "Obviously, Larry, these things take time. Bill and I were married for a lot of years—"

LARRY KING: "Through rocky times! Rocky! But in the end it was . . ."

HILLARY CLINTON: "Well, we had settled in. You know, you reach a certain age, and—"

LARRY KING: "Understood! I'm in the same place myself. From New Paltz, New York, hello!"

CALLER: "Hello, I was wondering if Mrs. Clinton and Senator Obama have ever really talked about that day, and the plane crash and everything?"

LARRY KING: "You guys talk about that?"

HILLARY CLINTON: "Well, yes, Larry, we have shared some of our feelings about the accident. He and Michelle telephoned me just minutes after the news went out about Bill and the plane crash, and they were very kind and supportive and I must say, despite the rancor of the nomination process, neither one of them could have been nicer."

LARRY KING: "Did he ask you to be on the ticket right then?"

HILLARY CLINTON: "That might have been inappropriate."

LARRY KING: "True that! 'Sorry that your husband died in a plane crash on the way to a campaign event! Want to be vice president?' Awkward!"

HILLARY CLINTON: "Yes, well."

LARRY KING: "From Rapid City! Hello!"

CALLER: "Hi Larry! I'd like to know when Mrs. Clinton found out that the plane Mr. Clinton was on had hit the van that Jeremiah Wright was driving in?"

LARRY KING: "Good question. Was that an hour or so later?"

HILLARY CLINTON: "I'm not sure, Larry. I was still in a state of shock."

LARRY KING: "But you guys made your announcement that night, correct?"

HILLARY CLINTON: "I believe so. When I found out that Reverend Wright had been killed by the plane my husband was flying in, I immediately called Senator Obama to express my condolences."

LARRY KING: "And that's when . . . ?"

HILLARY CLINTON: "That's when we agreed to run together. Yes. I think that was the timetable."

LARRY KING: "Serendipity! Out of the ashes, etc.! Thursday night! Suzanne Somers! From Concord, California! Hello!"

CALLER: "Hi, Larry. I was wondering if there's ever been an investigation of the events of that day?"

LARRY KING: "Good question. Well? Investigation? FAA and whatnot?"

HILLARY CLINTON: "There was an investigation, Larry, as there always is when a small propeller plane has an accident."

LARRY KING: "What did they find?"

HILLARY CLINTON: "The fuel line was punctured."

LARRY KING: "Hmm. Do they suspect foul play?"

HILLARY CLINTON: "You'd have to ask them, Larry. I'm focusing on the upcoming campaign, and on being a terrific vice president."

LARRY KING: "Great attitude! It's about the future, am I right?"

HILLARY CLINTON: "You're so right, Larry."

LARRY KING: "Still, the day seemed like a twofer, you know?"

HILLARY CLINTON: "I'm not sure I follow you, Larry."

LARRY KING: "Well, you know, let me put this as delicately as possible. At the time of the crash, Bill Clinton wasn't doing you any favors in the getting-elected department."

HILLARY CLINTON: "He was problematic, I'll agree to that."

LARRY KING: "And Jeremiah Wright—man, was he a thorn in the Obama side or what?"

HILLARY CLINTON: "Now that I'm on the ticket, I can see how the media blew that out of proportion."

LARRY KING: "Yeah, but with both of them gone, all of a sudden, in an accident—"

HILLARY CLINTON: "A freak accident, Larry."

LARRY KING: "That's what I'm saying. I mean, what are the odds?"

HILLARY CLINTON: "Seventeen billion four hundred sixty-five million eight hundred fifty thousand to one. So they say."

LARRY KING: "So ya gotta ask . . ."

HILLARY CLINTON: "Ask what?"

LARRY KING: "Is this a *Strangers on a Train*–type deal. Crisscross. A two-birds kind of event. Thoughts?"

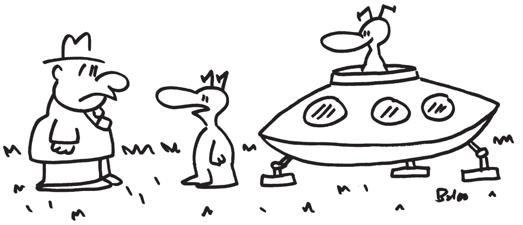
HILLARY CLINTON: "I'm focused on the future, Larry. Not on some crackpot conspiracy theories about how a small propeller plane can be sabotaged and then radio-controlled from the ground to hit a moving target that's been planted with a homing device. Or whatever the nuts on the Huffington Post are saying."

LARRY KING: "Arianna Huffington! A dotcom zillionaire!"

HILLARY CLINTON: "She's done quite well for herself."

LARRY KING: "Wolf Blitzer next! And on *Larry King Weekend*! The cast of *High School Musical*!"

HELP!!!!



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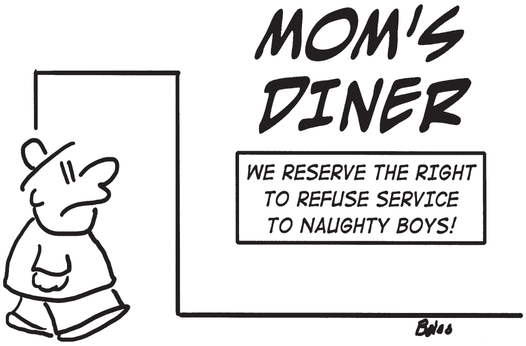
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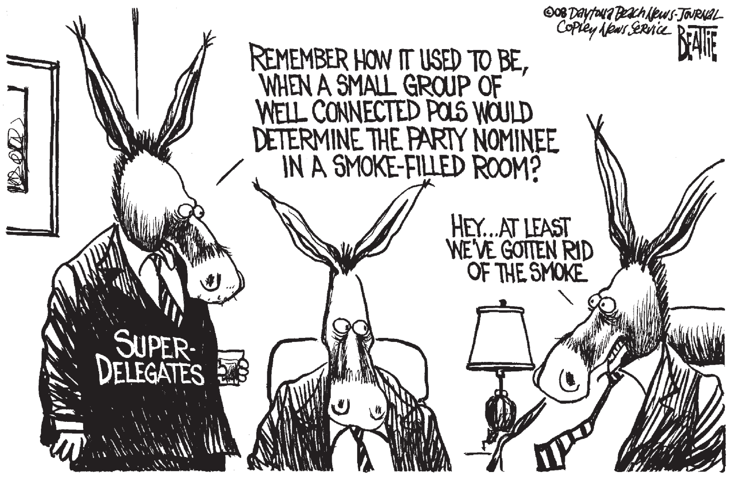
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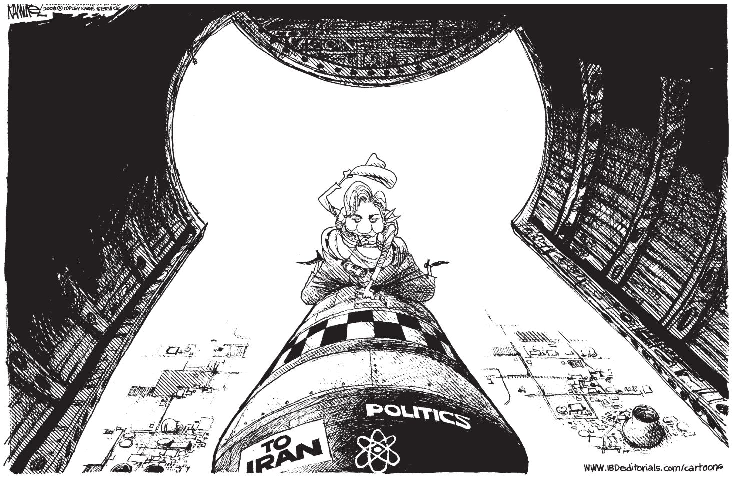
BEATTIE
REMEMBER HOW IT USED TO BE, WHEN A SMALL GROUP OF WELL CONNECTED POLS WOULD DETERMINE THE PARTY NOMINEE IN A SMOKE-FILLED ROOM?
HEY...AT LEAST WE'VE GOTTEN RID OF THE SMOKE
SUPER-DELEGATES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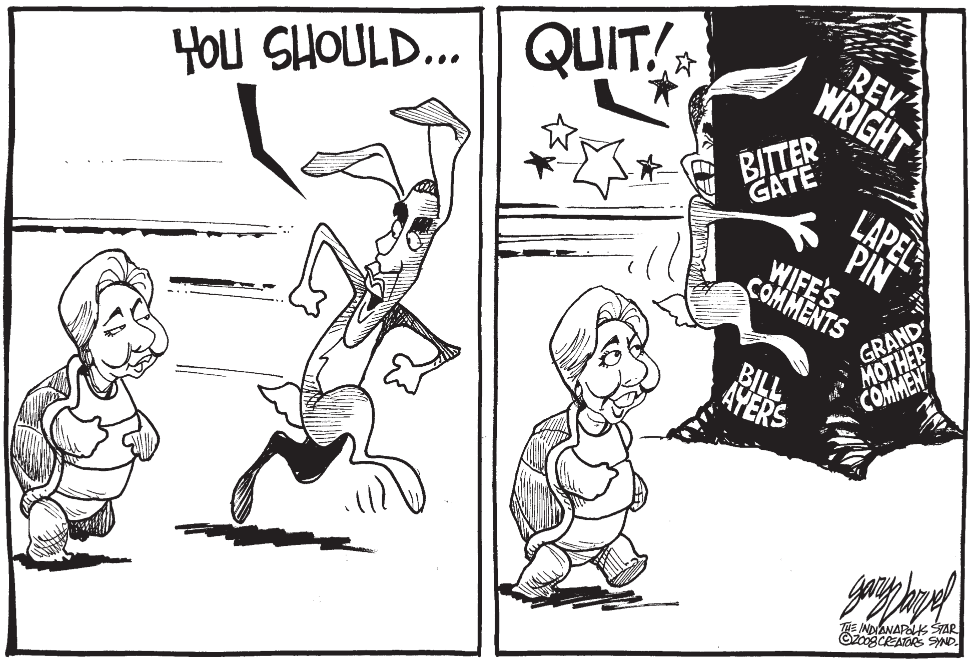
MRS. STRANGELOVE OR: HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB.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FLORENCE KING

The Examined Gesture

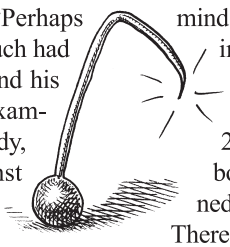
AMERICANS' war against the Socratic ideal of the examined life has entered a new phase. We have always condemned introspection and insight as decadent and effeminate, but now that everybody is expected to be a "people person" we must hone our sensitivity, the better to probe and thereby understand the needs and problems of that sacred band known as "others."

Americans are as leery of abstract thinking as ever, but we have found a way to quack like a duck without being mistaken for a duck. It's the new pseudoscience called "body language," which lets us study crossed knees instead of crossed wires and convince ourselves that we have plumbed the depths of human psychology as we continue to say, "What you see is what you get."

Body language began as a parlor game, graduated into a cottage industry, and now threatens to occupy a campus-sized complex with its own zip code. At first the cable channels used body-language hobbyists in light features to explain how to tell what your boss or date is thinking by how often he shuffles his feet. When Campaign '08 heated up, the hobbyists were rechristened "commentators" and sent forth to interpret Hillary's elbows and Barack's fingers. And now one channel—I think it's Fox—has a body-language *consultant* to analyze every tic and twitch in the debates.

What we learn from these people is nothing more than what dogs and horses pick up on instantly, the only difference being that body-language consultants can't lay their ears back. We have fallen for their carnival sideshow because it lets us stay on the outside—literally—of the human condition. Knees and feet stick out, hands can be touched, changes in voice tone can be heard. It's safe on the outside, but the examined life is like those ancient maps with unexplored lands marked "Here Be Monsters." Some people want to know what's there; the Greeks did, the French still do, but Americans don't. We are the most unreflective, indeed, the most antireflective people who ever lived, and if we had not already been headed in that direction the Kennedys would have greased our path.

Fear of insight and introspection is the ongoing theme of *The Kennedys: An American Drama*, by Peter Collier and David Horowitz, who posit: "Perhaps because of his sense of how much had been repressed in the family, and his sense of how dangerous the examined life might be for a Kennedy, Jack always inveighed against what he called 'psychologizing.'"



The whole family ethos militated against analytical reflection, with Old Joe yelling "When the going gets tough, the tough get going," the betrayed Rose voicing beautiful thoughts, and the constant clamor of physical exercise in the background. No one even tried until after the assassination, when Bobby "turned almost desperately to literature in an attempt to make contact with the realm of ideas and feelings," devouring Camus and Aeschylus in "a ferocious search for insight." But it was too late; he gave up his stab at the examined life and confronted his grief by climbing the newly named Mt. Kennedy with characteristic fanfare, paying homage to those sacred American tenets of keeping busy and being too tired to think.

The upshot of this national trait is that Americans willfully refuse to see through anything or anybody. Insight, introspection, intuition, and the good old-fashioned hunch are products of a free-ranging mind, a sleepless curiosity, and a compulsion to speculate, but we bar the door against all three with our latest cliché. You've heard it on talk shows. A "sensitive" (i.e., vital) subject arises and the person speaking holds up his hands in the surrender pose and chortles: "I'm not going to go there." Whereupon everyone else chortles and somebody changes the subject so that the crux of the discussion, the central point of it all, never comes up again.

Taking people at face value—or "What you see is what you get," plus a few elbows and knees—is particularly convenient in an election year, because sticking to a candidate's body language allows a commentator to discuss harmless idiosyncrasies without "going there," i.e., to the candidate's mind. There may be no *there* there, or there may be monsters, but if you dare broach the subject someone will bark, "Are you a psychiatrist?"

You bet I am. I am a writer, and we are still the true interpreters of the human mind and heart even though the boys in the white coats have pulled the rug out from under us. We were psyching people out 2,500 years before Freud was born, which is why Bobby Kennedy turned to Aeschylus.

There is no such thing as a "writing talent." Anyone can be taught to write a good sentence. What writers are born with is a "third ear," not for words but for human nature. And like people with an ear for music who can play the piano without lessons or notes, we can't explain how we know what we know—we just know.

I know, for example, that you can measure a person's mean streak by counting the number of times he says "Just kidding." Michelle Obama said it immediately after calling her husband an "accessory," and, to be fair 'n' balanced, Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity say it a lot too.

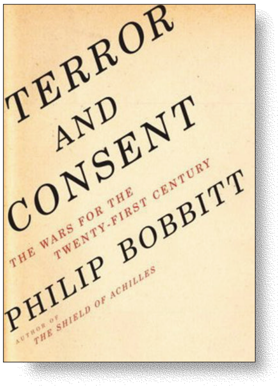
I know that John Edwards hates the blue-collar, mill-worker background that he never stops extolling. He gave himself away when he told the story of going to a restaurant and having to get up and leave as soon as his father saw the prices on the menu. He can still feel the eyes of the other diners boring into the back of his now exquisitely barbered neck.

Emily Dickinson foresaw our body-language craze: "Tell all the Truth but tell it Slant— / Success in Circuit lies / Too bright for our infirm Delight / The Truth's superb surprise." **NR**

Florence King can be reached at P.O. Box 7113, Fredericksburg, VA 22404.

books, arts & manners

Plan for a Century


TERROR
AND
CONSENT
THE WARS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
PHILIP BOBBITT
AUTHOR OF THE SHIELD OF ACHILLES

Terror and Consent:
The Wars for the Twenty-first
Century, by Philip Bobbitt
(Knopf, 688 pp., $35)

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

Anyone who finished Philip Bobbitt's massive, 900-page-plus *The Shield of Achilles* (2002) might not be surprised about the size and organization of its sequel, *Terror and Consent*—a 600-page-plus volume replete with book parts, chapters within chapters, Roman-numeraled subsections, bullet-marked sub-subsections, a conclusion, and a coda, all fortified with lengthy indented quotations, footnotes, and italicized passages. It would be easy to dismiss *Terror and Consent* as a rambling excursus in desperate need of an editor to prune away redundancy, extraneous argument, and circumlocution. Indeed, the book at times becomes a labyrinth of obfuscation, in which insights—often brilliant and original—are trying desperately to avoid blind alleys and somehow bump their way to the reader.

That said, Bobbitt—a noted law professor at Columbia University and a veteran public servant—has raised a number of critical issues that confront the United States in our post-9/11 world. If there is a voice-in-the-wilderness prophetic quality about the book, it at least achieves the effect of bringing earnestness to the discussion rather than the "I told you so" one-upmanship that dominates so many exposés of our supposed failures in Iraq. Americans of all persuasions, according to Bobbitt, do not grasp that we still are in deadly danger in the War on Terror, because of the nonsensical manner in which we are fighting and the rapidly changing conditions abroad that favor our enemies.

Bobbitt envisions three broad theaters in which we must seek to avoid another 9/11. First, the U.S. must preempt attacks by global networks of terrorists. Second, we must be eternally vigilant to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. And, third, the West must protect people worldwide from natural and manmade catastrophes that destroy civilized society or take away basic human rights, and thus leave them as fodder for terrorist ideologues and religious extremists. Throughout the book, Bobbitt summarizes these three aims by the simple refrain "We are fighting terror, not just terrorists."

At the heart of the book is the author's complaint about how we're waging the War on Terror generally, and the Iraq War specifically. He argues that our government is complacent and blinkered: We are utterly failing to realize that the once autonomous and sovereign nation-state is disappearing. Transnational companies globalize our economies and create layers of life-sustaining complexity—and vulnerability—in our daily lives that the nation-state cannot fully manage or even understand, much less protect from terrorists. Communications increasingly are without national sponsorship, identity, or responsibility. Terrorists, in turn, fight for religious and racial grievances that are not rooted in nationalism or patriotism; the terrorists are launching more direct grassroots appeals to specific angry groups. The stilted news coverage of an al-Jazeera, or Internet rumors of a flushed Koran, can do as much harm as an enemy division, while a terrorist can download off the web everything from the ingredients of nerve gas to instructions on how to make a dirty bomb—without the need for a multi-billion-dollar Manhattan Project.

Whole swaths of tribal Pakistan, the interiors of some South American countries, and ghettoes in Middle Eastern cities are beyond the control of central governments. And yet here are found the most likely future enemies of Western nation-states. Many terrorists assume that they are immune from America's conventional military reach, and at times serve the anti-Western interests of their patrons, who officially deny any culpability for terrorist operations launched from their soil. That jihadists don't have Abrams tanks or F-22 fighter jets does not mean that in the future a half dozen or so cannot kill millions.

Bobbitt argues that we rely far too much on conventional military power designed to take out hostile nation-states. Strategic success far more often requires careful counterinsurgency, in which highly trained and relatively small military forces target stateless terrorists while not offending the surrounding populations among whom the terrorists oper-

Mr. Hanson, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, received the National Humanities Medal in 2007 and the Bradley Prize in 2008.

TOAST

Nothing, this foam, this virgin verse
To designate nought but the cup
As far off drowns a troop
Of Sirens plunging upside down.

We are navigating, O my diverse
Friends, I already on the poop,
You the splendid prow that cuts
The flailing waves of winter;

A fine inebriety fills me
Without fear of foundering
To lift this toast on high—

Solitude, shoal and star,
To whatever may be worth
The white care of our sail.

—STÉPHANE MALLARMÉ
translated by Richard O'Connell

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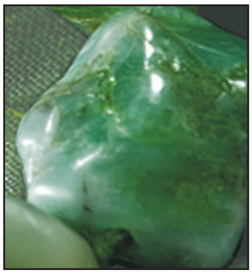
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ate. Sophisticated intelligence, too, is critical—but impossible without agents steeped in the language and cultural byways of the enemy. Artificial government fiefdoms and protocols, such as the many firewalls between the FBI, the CIA, and the various defense intelligence agencies, are dangerous relics of the Cold War. Yet even the most successful anti-terrorism operations, Bobbitt believes, will inevitably fail unless the U.S. can conduct them with plausible legal justification—one that reassures billions abroad that they have a stake in a shared global economy that functions logically and according to law.

Note carefully that, while Bobbitt adopts much of the Left's criticism of the current administration's war policies, his point is more sophisticated and compelling. Instead of endorsing the usual tired harangue that Bush deliberately destroyed American jurisprudence and ignored international law, Bobbitt contends that even if the Bush administration had wished to follow the letter of the law, there was simply no existing statute offering the necessary legitimacy to win the necessary war. The fault he finds in Guantánamo, for example, or in the much-publicized renditions and waterboarding, is not the administration's supposed snubbing of national and international law, but rather the absence of any existing jurisprudence that would have addressed the situation. Just as the Pentagon is going to have to find a way to win the hearts and minds of foreign populations, and turn them against the terrorists in their midst, so too legal scholars and politicians must craft new sorts of anti-terrorism laws to provide legitimization for the unconventional operations that will be necessary to civilization's survival.

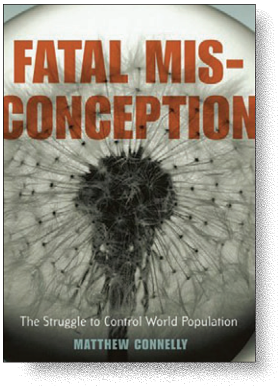
Bobbitt artfully explains "why they hate us": The world's sole "hyperpower" presents to the angry and envious a symbolic summation of others' collective success, and—when hit—it alone can extend proof of terrorist prowess. This is why the legal scholar Bobbitt's pragmatic, and completely accurate, assessment of the need for lawfulness is so welcome. With so many abroad gunning for the American hyperpower, we sorely need a framework that extends legality to military operations that are poorly understood but completely necessary. We must never separate law from strategy, since only the formal sense of right will transform battlefield victories into lasting strategic success. Market-based and transnational systems of commerce may ultimately bring us all to an "end of history" of shared humanity and affluence. But the current ugly transition is alienating millions of the desperate and dangerous, who must be outsmarted as well as simply opposed.

While Bobbitt draws a great deal from the Western past, and cites history and literature as often as political science, I am not sure that globalization and 9/11 have quite made the world new. Inasmuch as human nature remains fixed across time and space, war, like water, has an eternal essence—even if its pump becomes ever more efficient in sending out torrents rather than mere dribbles. In that sense, a Syria or an Iran might well reconsider its sponsorship of terrorists should it be warned that its government and people will pay the collective price for the acts of a few supposed renegades on its soil. And, in some cases, the ability of a Teheran or Damascus to deny culpability for terrorist operations does not reflect so much a brave new world as our own gullibility in accepting such old lies and excuses.

Should the North Korean army cross the DMZ, the Argentines land again on the Falklands, or another Milosevic conduct another genocide, generals will still look to their jets, carriers, and tanks, as they have for the last seven decades. And should terrorists pull off another couple of 9/11s, the American people—in righteous outrage, as when they faced down the aggressions of Japanese militarism and German fascism—won't worry too much about whether their response is inordinate or deemed insufficiently legal by some bystanders abroad.

I end with a modest suggestion. Bobbitt is too valuable a voice not to be heard. A range of authors, from Robert Kagan to Christopher Hitchens, have appealed to general audiences by condensing complex ideas into easily accessible and often short extended essays. Should Bobbitt write a brief summary of the 1,500 pages of *The Shield of Achilles* and *Terror and Consent*, his valuable and astute ideas might find the audience that his recent two books sadly will not—but surely deserve. **NR**

Population Bombing



Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population, by Matthew Connelly (Harvard, 544 pp., $35)

PHILLIP LONGMAN

IN the 20th century, a global network of colluding activists, institutions, and governments sought to engineer solutions to various real and perceived social problems by, as Matthew Connelly puts it in his new book, planning "other people's families." In its most egregious expression, this movement led to the forced sterilization of millions of people around the world, including many thousands in the U.S., on the grounds that they were—genetically or otherwise—unfit. California alone had sterilized 7,500 people by 1931, and the practice continued in other states up until the 1970s.

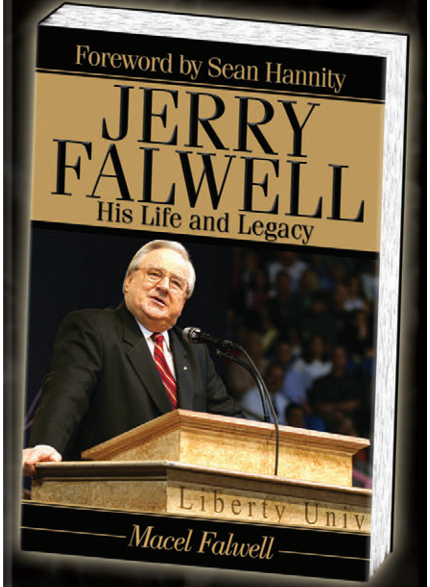
This movement also, through philanthropies and government-directed foreign aid, spent billions of dollars distributing sometimes-dangerous birth-control devices and funding abortion clinics throughout much of the developing world, even though fertility rates across the globe were already plummeting. Connelly writes: "The great tragedy of population control, the fatal misconception, was to think that one could know other people's interests better than they knew it themselves. . . . The essence of population control, whether it targeted migrants, the 'unfit,' or families that seemed either too big or too small, was to make rules for other people without having to answer to them."

Connelly, a professor of history at Columbia University and the youngest of eight children in a Catholic family, offers a new history of the population-control movement that is evenhanded and sensitive to historical context, if also naïve in its ideal of libertarianism in population matters. His chief scholarly claim is to have been the first to explore the relevant archives of the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, the Population Council, International Planned Parenthood, the World Bank, key U.N. agencies, and other institutions deeply involved in efforts to curb world population growth. From this research, he emerges with the conclusion that while no formal, genocidal conspiracy existed, "some of the leading protagonists did, in fact, act in underhanded ways, pretending to be advancing one agenda while secretly harboring another."

Unfortunately, Connelly's heavy reliance on archival material from these institutions has led him to write a narrative that for the most part depicts the population-control movement as an endless series of international conferences—from the sixth "International Neo-Malthusian and Birth Control Conference" in New York in 1925 to the 1994 U.N. "Cairo Conference"—at which various factions engaged in doctrinal debate. This institutional perspective is important, but often makes for dull reading and misses the deeper psychology behind the actors in the movement. Connelly does discuss, of course, the large personalities involved, such as Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger and *Population Bomb* author Paul Ehrlich. But their stories appear in fragments throughout the book and Connelly makes little effort to sum up or judge their underlying motives and character.

For example, while discussing how the Holocaust affected public opinion on population matters, Connelly mentions Sanger's view only in passing. Quoting a 1950 address to Planned Parenthood by Sanger, he lets drop that this icon of today's feminist Left "pointed to the death camps as conclusive proof of the 'widespread devaluation of human lives' and the urgent need for policies to improve them, 'beginning with the sterilization of those with dysgenetic

Mr. Longman, a senior fellow at the New America Foundation, is the author of *The Empty Cradle: How Falling Birthrates Threaten World Prosperity and What to Do about It.*



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Sun./Nov. 9	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars
Mon./Nov. 10	Providenciales, Turks & Caicos	7:00 AM	3:00PM	afternoon seminar late-night smoker
Tue./Nov. 11	San Juan, Puerto Rico	10:00AM	11:00PM	
Wed./Nov. 12	St. Thomas, USVI	8:00AM	5:00PM	evening cocktail reception
Thu./Nov. 13	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars late-night smoker
Fri./Nov. 14	Half Moon Cay	8:00AM	4:00PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
Sat./Nov. 15	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	7:00AM		

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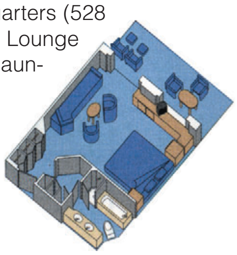
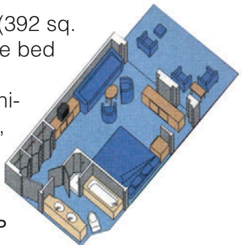


Category SA

DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:	$ 4,513 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:	$ 8,013

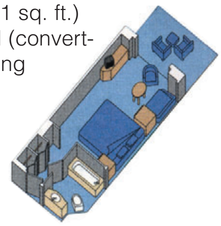
SUPERIOR SUITE Grand stateroom (392 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), whirlpool bath/shower, large sitting area, DVD, mini-bar, refrigerator, floor-to-ceiling windows, and much more.



Category SS

DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:	$ 3,513 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:	$ 6,013

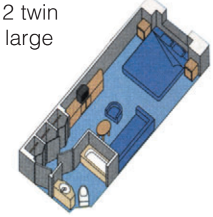
DELUXE OUTSIDE Spacious cabin (241 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), bath with shower, sitting area, mini-bar, tv, refrigerator, and floor-to-ceiling windows.



Categories VA / VB / VC

DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:	$ 2,913 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:	$ 4,413

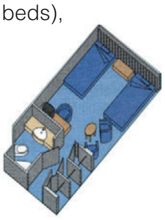
LARGE OCEAN VIEW Comfortable quarters (190 sq. ft.) features queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), bathtub with shower, sitting area, tv, large ocean-view windows.



Category D

DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:	$ 2,413 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:	$ 3,313

LARGE INSIDE Cozy but ample cabin quarters (185 sq. ft.) features queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), bathtub with shower, sitting area, tv.



Category K

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Are you a past Holland America cruiser? ☐ Yes ☐ No

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qualities of body and mind.'" Was this, truly, the meaning of the Holocaust for Sanger, and if so, what does it say about her?

Connelly does, however, get the broad outlines of the population-control movement right. It originated in the late 19th century, when Western elites began noticing their own falling fertility and the increasing population of "the unfit" (both at home and in Western colonies). Some, like Theodore Roosevelt, responded to the threat of what he and many others called "race suicide" by exhorting educated women to have more children. Later, many Western governments, including Germany and Italy under fascism, turned to, and today are returning to, pro-natalist policies, such as offering large family allowances and "baby bonuses."

But during most of the 20th century, the dominant strain of the population-control movement rejected pro-natalism and embraced a negative eugenics. In a passage Connelly does not quote, for example, Sanger wrote in 1922: "The lack of balance between the birth-rate of the 'unfit' and the 'fit,' admittedly the greatest present menace to civilization, can never be rectified by the inauguration of a cradle competition between these two classes." Rather than haranguing the well-to-do about their small families, Sanger argued that "the most urgent problem today is how to limit and discourage the over-fertility of the mentally and physically defective. Possibly drastic and Spartan methods may be forced upon American society if it continues complacently to encourage the chance and chaotic breeding that has resulted from our stupid, cruel sentimentalism."

Into this mix of motives came two other strains of ideology, particularly as the century wore on: a libertarian strain of feminism emphasizing reproductive rights, and a Malthusian form of environmentalism. Sanger, when she wasn't talking about the need to improve "the race," justified birth control as a right of women to control their own bodies. She sometimes did this in the same sentence, as in: "Only upon a free, self-determining motherhood can rest any unshakable structure of racial betterment."

Meanwhile, as world population doubled, then doubled again in the 20th century, figures such as Paul Ehrlich justified negative eugenics (the effort to weed out "undesirable" traits) in the name of avoiding world famine and preserving the planet, including the vanishing habitats of his beloved butterflies. Responding to Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi's policy of coercing millions of her countrymen to undergo vasectomies in the Seventies, Ehrlich regretted that Western governments had not done more to facilitate the campaign. "We should have volunteered logistical support in the form of helicopters, vehicles, and surgical instruments," Ehrlich wrote (in another comment not quoted by Connelly). "We should have sent doctors to aid in the program by setting up centers for training para-medical personnel to do vasectomies. Coercion? Perhaps, but coercion in a good cause."

Connelly goes easy on Ehrlich and others who share his Malthusian mindset. Indeed, he proclaims what is (to me at least) an obnoxious moral equivalence between supporters of forced sterilization and social and religious conservatives opposed to birth control and abortion. But he does score two strong points against the negative-eugenics movement that are highly relevant to how we should think about population control and the environment.

One is that fertility rates were in steep decline in both the developed and the developing world long before the introduction of modern birth-control devices. Indeed, in countries such as Brazil, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, in which contraceptives were difficult to obtain, birthrates fell just as quickly as in countries that made massive efforts to suppress population growth.

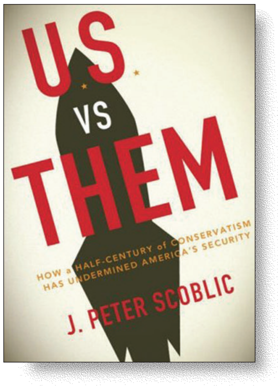
Demographers now agree that human beings have long known how to control their own fertility and have done so when it made individual economic sense—as it does now for most of the world's inhabitants. Today's global decline in birthrates results primarily from the rapid urbanization of the Third World and the increasing educational attainment of women, both of which have dramatically raised the direct and opportunity cost of children. Also at work, many demographers say, is the diffusion of individualistic, and by extension anti-natalist, values through television and other global media.

(An aside: If birthrates were plummeting around the world, why did population grow so much in the 20th century? Mostly it was because of dramatic reductions in infant mortality, especially in the developing world. But while we are still far from eliminating infant mortality, its incidence is already low enough that continuing progress on that front adds little to population. This, combined with continuing falling birthrates, particularly in developing countries, leaves global population aging rapidly and on a course toward absolute decline by as early as mid-century.)

The other important point Connelly makes is that while growth of human population is not the problem many people once thought it was, growth in the world's number of cars, air-conditioned houses, and other sources of energy demand and pollution undeniably is a challenge, and population controllers are in large part responsible. As families have grown smaller throughout most of the world, their standard of living has increased, and so too has their environmental footprint. Not only does a population of small families and childless individuals require more housing units per person, the resources freed up by low fertility typically increase per capita consumption of everything else, from beef to oil and coal. Nowhere is this truer than in the two countries where population controllers had the most influence: India and China. In India, fertility rates dropped 22 percent between 1990 and 2003 and are now below replacement levels in the southern provinces. At the same time per capita carbon-dioxide emissions increased by 50 percent as more and more Indians achieved Western living standards. Meanwhile, China, with its famous "one child" policy, saw its per capita CO_2 emissions increase by 53 percent, according to the World Bank. Each of those single-child "little emperors" who constitute the rising generation in China produces far more pollution than his peasant forebears.

Those who today point to the specter of global warming in hopes of reinvigorating the negative-eugenics movement of the last century should be careful what they wish for. The first-order effect of Zero Population Growth, let alone negative population growth, would most likely be a further increase in greenhouse-gas emissions, as individuals diverted investment in children into higher personal consumption. At the same time, the specter of global aging and population decline, particularly in the West, will undoubtedly strengthen the voices of those on the other side of the population-control debate who have long sought stricter limits on birth control and abortion. Consistent with the long history of mankind, population control is not about to go away. **NR**

The Wrong Stuff


U.S. VS THEM
HOW a HALF-CENTURY of CONSERVATISM HAS UNDERMINED AMERICA'S SECURITY
J. PETER SCOBLIC

U.S. vs. Them: How a Half-Century of Conservatism Has Undermined America's Security, by J. Peter Scoblic (Viking, 368 pp., $25.95)

MIDGE DECTER

The 20th century was a time of many dire misapprehensions of reality—"The War to End Wars" and "Peace in Our Time" being only two of the most murderously consequential. There are always those who simply will not forsake their determination to cling to one or another comforting false idea of reality.

Take the case of J. Peter Scoblic, the executive editor of *The New Republic*. His purpose in this new book is to issue an indictment of those Americans who were supposedly responsible, through their advocacy of anti-Communist policies, for bringing the world to the point of possible mayhem. It seems that somehow, at just the wrong critical moment, this group of co-conspirators managed to wrest political power from the hands of wiser statesmen and to set the U.S. on an only briefly and sporadically interrupted course of what was at bottom no more than a form of simple-minded extremism.

Need one spell out who they were (and are)? First came the conservatives, who were given a forum in which to spread their ideas—as it happens, this very magazine—by the young William F. Buckley Jr. National Review was founded in 1955, and by 1964 conservatism had captured the GOP presidential nomination. It would, of course, take 16 more years before the conservatives would win the White House—with Ronald Reagan, who was in some sense even more their man than Barry Goldwater.

The ranks of William Buckley's community of conservatives, staunchly opposed to making deals with Communist powers, had in the meantime been swelled by the arrival on the scene of a group of former liberals: sometime activists in the Democratic party, friends of the labor movement headed by George Meany, onetime backers of Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson for president, and now enthusiastic Reaganauts. These people had come to be called "neoconservatives"—and, in Scoblic's telling, they quickly swarmed throughout the recesses of the Reagan administration, if anything causing even more damage than their old-conservative confreres to the country's national security.

Now, Scoblic knows what he knows, and even the most learned of men cannot know everything, but it does seem strange that a member of the staff of a magazine devoted to cultural and social as well as political affairs should undertake to write about conservatives and neoconservatives—and at the same time show so little curiosity about what was going on in his country that might have given rise not only to such people themselves, but to the power and influence granted them by large numbers of voters.

Be that as it may, and to Scoblic's undisguised dismay, these conservatives and neoconservatives did time after time manage to bring their nefarious influence to bear on U.S. policy. Among their malfeasances was the way they set themselves up to override the expertise of the intelligence community—by means of what came to be called "Team B," a conservative intelligence group studying Soviet intentions. They criticized the CIA for "mirror-imaging," that is, assuming that the enemy had the same principles and goals as the U.S. But, says Scoblic, it was the members of Team B themselves who—by automatically and blindly insisting on the opposite—had "essentially given up trying to uncover the truth."

The conservatives came together in an organization called the Committee on the Present Danger, from whence they succeeded in defeating the arms-limitation treaty known as SALT II—thus destroying yet another opportunity to introduce some saving sanity into world affairs.

Of course, Ronald Reagan was far from being just an object of conservative influence. He is, not surprisingly, one of the book's two main villains (the other being George W. Bush). For, as early as 1983, Reagan introduced what in the author's telling may have been the craziest, most naïve, and most potentially dangerous proposal of all: the Strategic Defense Initiative. (He writes that "there was ample evidence to show that the Soviets could penetrate any missile defense by using metal chaff, decoys, or just a larger number of warheads.")

Thus, we are told, the policies of the early Reagan years were dangerously destabilizing. Later, the situation improved somewhat: Reagan wanted to cut through the nuclear impasse, not so much to negotiate limits to strategic arms as to get the Soviets to agree to reduce their number. In other words, from SALT to START. This was an idea that went nowhere, largely through the fault of the general whom the, alas, ever-ambivalent Reagan sent to negotiate the reduction. Finally, however, with the accession of Mikhail Gorbachev to power, Reagan began to see the light about the possibility of at least an exchange of decent civil respect between the U.S. and the Soviets. He even invited Gorbachev to a summit in the U.S., and thereby, the book astonishingly informs us, became no less than "a pariah of the conservative movement." (It would seem that when the USSR collapsed, and with it the Soviet empire, Reagan, who was now out of office, was forgiven.)

All this is told in great detail. Names are named, connections identified, and memos and speeches quoted. But of what the Soviets were up to—were thinking, doing, saying, or even not saying—there is precious little, though in recent years a veritable treasure-trove of documentation has been made available. It would seem that the perilous race had been run on only one track.

By the arrival of George W. Bush, the

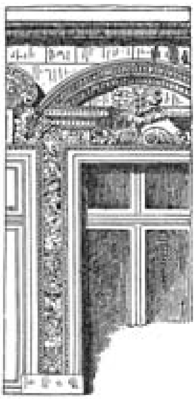
Midge Decter is an author whose work has often appeared in these pages.

world had, of course, been mightily changed. Nukes and their delivery systems were being produced by several countries, all somewhat less than reliable, and terrorism had become a far-from-uncommon form of political expression. And conservatives, those diehard believers in what Scoblic calls “the division of the world into good and evil,” were once again in the Washington saddle—though, he points out, early in Bush’s first term they had been suspicious of him for his emphasis on policies aimed at spreading what they regarded as too much compassion and uplift. (All that changed, of course, on 9/11, though subsequently they would become unhappy with him again, we are told, for his failure to take on the problem of Iran in what they would regard as a truly serious way.)

It goes without saying that Bush’s taking us into a war in Iraq followed from his willful refusal to play out the string of U.N. inspections, negotiations, and sanctions. His father, of course, had done much better in Iraq ten years earlier by limiting his aims and leaving the country’s government intact. But the son had other fish to fry, i.e., an altogether improper as well as dangerous ambition to meddle in the domestic political affairs of the Middle East. This ambition is not only certain to fail but has led to a serious diminution of both our national security and America’s standing in the world.

Now, let it not be said that J. Peter Scoblic, the author of this tireless indictment, has taken any pleasure in it. On the contrary, it grieves him. He needs to understand why it is that conservatives are so sunk in the sin of us-versus-them when what is so desperately needed is us-and-them. And evidently not having yet learned that the recourse to psychological analysis in a polemic about public policy can be a two-way street (why, for instance, is “us” so unfailingly to be seen either in error or wrongly motivated while “them” seems to be floating out there without either malice or motive?), he finds his answer in a book titled *The Denial of Death*, written some years ago by the psychologist Ernest Becker. Since all people fear to die, they need to assuage their anxiety by constructing a world-view beyond their merely corporeal existence. What explains the otherwise apparently irrational efforts of the conservatives, then, is their wish for immortality based on the idea that they are “engaged in a grand struggle for liberty and against evil.”

And, at the book’s end, departing from the presumptions of psychoanalysis to the preachments of one’s maiden aunt Sally, he writes: “When [the conservatives] define regimes that seek weapons of mass destruction as the chief threat, rather than the weapons themselves, they promote unnecessary war.” To be sure, he concedes, sometimes we may need to exercise the threat of force, even if unilaterally, but our chief challenge is to create a global covenant that not only renews a commitment to the existing nonproliferation regime but will also lead other states “in forging a novel compact that will stymie states like North Korea and Iran.”



The mind boggles. Conservatives are charged with believing themselves engaged in a struggle against evil and for the preservation and spread of liberty—a belief that has already proven costly to the world and may prove even costlier—as a way of avoiding the knowledge of their mortality. But what is it that disregard of the world’s experience of the past century—of persecution, martyrdom, torture, mass murder, enslavement, not to speak of dishonest pacts, violated treaties, and malign international organizations—is making it possible for J. Peter Scoblic to avoid knowing? The answer is that to the extent the world is ever to become a more benign place for ordinary people to live in, it will have been the belief in both the benign and, where necessary, the warlike uses of American power that helped to make it possible. If such an idea must be characterized as conservative, so be it. But if, on the other hand, the government of the United States were ever to adopt his view of America’s role in the world, it would be a sad thing for him indeed if he were among those who reaped the consequences. **NR**

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Stuck in the Big Ditch

Drawing the Line at the Big Ditch: The Panama Canal Treaties and the Rise of the Right, by Adam Clymer (Kansas, 304 pp., $29.95)

GERARD ALEXANDER

THE prominent historian Alan Brinkley wrote in 1994 that "it would be hard to argue that the American Right has received anything like the amount of attention from historians that its role in 20th-century politics and culture suggests it should." He'd be hard-pressed to say that today. Starting even before 1994, historians have produced a small river of books on the subject, and they are joined by political scientists, sociologists, journalists, and even some of those psychologists who continue to treat right-of-center views as a kind of mental impairment. Given all their work, we are now in a position to say that there might be one thing worse than hundreds of academics and journalists ignoring the Right, which is the same group writing about it.

Many recent books have been written by authors drawn to the subject by profound antipathy for conservatives. And many authors are searching for some singular event or development that would explain the rise of conservatism at liberalism's expense in modern America. In a 1986 book, Sidney Blumenthal helped launch the trope that conservatives won because they organized more strategically, inspiring some even now to recommend that progressives imitate what Thomas Edsall has called the Right's "highly coordinated network of individuals and organizations—with a shared stake in a strong, centralized political machine." George Lakoff pointed to a different advantage, saying that conservatives frame issues more successfully than liberals. Others reject these claims as shallow, and look instead to deeper sociological roots of politics, such as the politicization of conservative evangelicals in the 1960s and 1970s. Recently, a large slew of studies have argued that conservatives won by using the busing, crime, and tax issues to corral white "racial conservatives" into their electoral column.

The most quixotic entrant into this crowded market is Adam Clymer's claim that the Panama Canal played a major role in the "rise of the Right." The U.S. had famously built the Canal and treated the Canal Zone as its territory. The Panamanians were initially gratified by their independence and mollified by annual payments, but eventually wanted it back. Presidents from Eisenhower onward wrangled with the issue of U.S. control, and Jimmy Carter eventually negotiated treaties with the Panamanian government, led at the time by the leftist strongman Omar Torrijos. America's debate on the question reflected serious concerns on both sides. Continuing U.S. control might deepen anti-Americanism in Latin America, even to the point of inspiring crippling attacks on the Canal. But if Washington relinquished control to Panama, the Canal could become a victim of that country's unstable politics and Torrijos's flirtation with Cuba. The treaties turning over the Canal to Panamanian control by century's end were eventually ratified in contentious votes in the Senate in 1978.

Clymer, a former *New York Times* reporter and editor, isn't courting controversy when he says that conservatives used the Canal's national-security aspects to whip up sentiments, enroll activists, and make life difficult for pro-treaty senators at the time. But he goes on to argue that the Canal issue ultimately sustained Ronald Reagan's 1976 campaign for the GOP presidential nomination, and thereby may have made possible his run in 1980; delivered Reagan a batch of allies in the Senate in 1978 and 1980; helped shift the GOP to the right; and inspired the durable legacies of independent-group spending in campaigns and vicious single-issue attack ads (though for some reason only a Republican attack on a Democrat comes to his mind as an example). He reaches a climax when he claims that the "Panama Canal no longer divides Panama. But the fissures it opened thirty years ago have widened; they divide the United States."

Now, of course conservative activists made use of the Canal, just as they would have done with any other issue at hand. The Canal fight turned up new names for Richard Viguerie's mailing lists, it may have provided the edge in one or two Senate races, and it permitted Reagan to generate one of his trademark phrases ("We built it. We paid for it. It's ours."). But even Clymer's own discussion shows that the overarching theme of his book is badly over-hyped. Reagan did not base his 1976 bid on the issue, and Clymer acknowledges that it was "never central" in 1980 either. He focuses heavily on the fate in 1978 and 1980 of senators who voted for the treaties. But, in many of these cases, even he concludes that the incumbent would have lost anyway or that the data are too slim to be sure. So Clymer's evidence is underwhelming, even before you notice that he omits mention of the majority of pro-treaty Democratic senators who were reelected in the uphill year of 1980. The book's thesis isn't exactly strengthened when entire chapters about conservative political-action committees and the early Reagan administration scarcely mention Panama.

Clymer never contends with the plausible alternative, namely that conservatives cared about the Canal treaties only because, in the late 1970s, they seemed just one more instance in a lengthy and unfortunate record of American loss of confidence and lack of resolve. Beyond that, the issue had no intrinsic interest. This would explain why, once Reagan was elected and reversed that slide, Panama evaporated as an issue and Reagan never tried to revise the treaties (something that George W. Bush, in the case of the ABM treaty, proved to be quite possible). And it would explain why the episode left no obvious scars on the body politic. As Clymer acknowledges, when the handover of the Canal took place during the Clinton administration, America's top officials did not attend—because no one cared. This makes it all the more mystifying that this book was ever written.

It also raises the question why so many authors have assumed that there is a "key" to the rise of the Right. Many seem to be treating liberalism as the natural state of affairs, and the conservative rise as an event that requires an explanation. Maybe it's a sign of intellectual progress that Sidney Blumenthal has just written a book titled *The Strange Death of Republican America*. Good luck with that too. **NR**

Mr. Alexander, an associate professor of politics at the University of Virginia, is writing a book about race and modern conservatism.

■ FILM ■

Birth Dearth

ROSS DOUTHAT

CAN infertility be funny? This is the first and most pressing question raised by *Baby Mama*, a cheerful little film premised on the theory that the "inhospitable" uterus of a late-30s professional woman can be mined for the same sort of laughs (and box-office dollars) delivered by last year's spate of unplanned-pregnancy comedies. Fifteen minutes into the film, I was ready to answer in the negative. However terrifying an unintended pregnancy may be, it's still a pregnancy, with a fundamentally happy outcome waiting at the end. Whereas the moments that can inspire laughs, however uncomfortable, when they're experienced by an unwed mother-to-be—going on bad dates, getting examined by inept doctors, visiting your judgmental mother and married-with-children sister—feel more like the stuff of tragedy when it's the *absence* of a child that's creating all the awkwardness.

The woman *Baby Mama* subjects to these indignities is Kate Holbrook, played by Tina Fey as a variation on the role she inhabits weekly on NBC's sitcom *30 Rock*—a quick-witted Girl Friday who keeps a male-dominated institution from running itself into the ground. Here, she's the indispensable vice president at One Earth, a Whole Foods-style conglomerate run by a ponytailed, faux-hippie tycoon (Steve Martin, having a ball) who likes to sit Buddha-style on conference tables and begin his sentences: "This morning, while I was swimming with the dolphins . . ." And Kate's star is on the rise, since One Earth is about to open a flagship store in her home city of Philadelphia; the project, her boss promises, will be her "baby."

But that isn't the baby Kate wants—and after fruitless trips to the adoption agency (five-year waiting list) and the doctor's office ("I don't like your uterus," he tells her, and puts the odds against conception at a million-to-one), she ends up opting for surrogate motherhood, through a firm run by a preening, outrageously fertile WASP played by Sigourney Weaver, who's pregnant with twins at 60. The firm, in turn, sets her up with Angie Ostrowiski, played by Fey's old *Saturday Night Live* castmate Amy Poehler, who's the gum-chewing, halter-top-sporting, Ho Ho–chomping, blue-collar antithesis of everything a Bobo like Kate considers sacred. And no sooner has the implantation taken place (or has it?) than Angie splits with her common-law husband (Dax Shepard) and shows up on Kate's doorstep, looking for a place to crash for the next eight months.

For a while, this plot twist looks like a solution to the "how do you make infertility funny" dilemma, since it promises to transform an uncomfortable comedy about sterility and surrogacy into a cutting satire about childbearing and class. (And even childbearing and race, since the plot throws in Romany Malco as Kate's black doorman, who lectures her on the "baby mama" phenomenon and notes, in passing, that he has two baby mamas of his own.) Fey and Poehler have great brunette-blonde chemistry, and their marriage of convenience—living together, going to Lamaze class and counseling together, going out (at Angie's urging) to clubs together—inspires some genuinely funny set-pieces. And the movie has fun with the peculiar culture of the socially conscious mass upper class—the smoothie bars and labor coaches, the absurd children's names ("Wingspan" and "Banjo") and the ubiquitous New Age nonsense.

Baby Mama's Fey and Poehler

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS

But the jokes are deliberately gentle, and the social commentary is superficial and ultimately inept. *Baby Mama* has the form of a satire but the soul of a lightweight romantic comedy, in which no differences—class, race, or even gender—really cut that deep, because everybody is basically an American yuppie at heart. Poehler's Angie, in particular, is the Pennsylvania high-school dropout that Barack Obama might have invented after a long day secluded with Jeff Foxworthy DVDs. You can tell she's supposed to be a redneck because she likes to sing along to *American Idol* video games, stick her gum under tables, dye her hair, and ogle tattooed guys in muscle shirts. But she talks in the savvy, ironic language of the haute bourgeoisie and lives in an apartment that most young Brooklynites would kill for—and inevitably, she just needs a little push from Kate to kick off a new career as a fashion designer.

So too with the other targets of *Baby Mama*'s satire. The pious, big-money world of Whole Foods comes in for some gentle ribbing, true, but Kate ends up finding romance with the ultimate socially conscious businessman, a former corporate lawyer (Greg Kinnear) who quit the world of sharks and suits to peddle smoothies in a hipster neighborhood. Malco's doorman may have two illegitimate children, but the women he's knocked up are kept safely off stage, and in the final reel we see him hanging out with all the upper-middle-class white people, playing with one of his kids at a birthday party—just another yuppie parent, his skin color and doorman's uniform forgotten or transcended.

Then there's Kate herself. In a different, darker satire of the American upper middle class, her barrenness would be a corollary of her careerism, the bitter fruit of a life spent climbing the corporate ladder. But *Baby Mama* is at pains to make it clear that her infertility has nothing to do with her age; it's purely accidental, the result of an oddly shaped uterus rather than a badly plotted life course. And without the excuse of satire or social commentary, we're right back where we started: with a comedy premised on a condition that's about as funny as a diabetes diagnosis.

I imagine you can guess how *Baby Mama* eventually wriggles out of this difficulty. If you aren't willing to turn your comedy black, it turns out, the only way to make infertility funny is to cheat. **NR**

■ CITY DESK ■

The Big Leagues

RICHARD BROOKHISER

YOUNG people read. You bet. I was just in a store that markets cheap crap from Asia—peasant blouses, edgy T-shirts, and sandals, walls and walls and walls of them—and in a corner by the door is a counter of books, impulse buys for the retiring shopper. What are the titles? One is called *Pokey Penis*—a Music Minus One pop-up book, made of cardboard pages with a circular hole in the center of each. When you poke through, you complete some picture of hot dogs, statuary, whatever. Fun at parties! Lots of books on living green. I knew this battle was lost when Kate O'Beirne told me that all her kids learned at Catholic school was recycling. As there are new sins, so there are new devotions. A book on how to argue with conservatives and win. It's easy, especially if you never meet any. A book on social acquirements for young ladies. The paragraph on artists whose names you should know—with admirable frankness, it says nothing about knowing their art—includes Damien Hirst. Give him credit, his stuffed shark swam all the way to the Metropolitan Museum. Philippe de Montebello, no less, called it "iconic." Shouldn't he have sent it across the park to the Museum of Natural History? The oldest artist on the list was Andy Warhol. Marilyn silk screens are classical civilization. A book on church signage across America—FREE TICKETS TO HEAVEN, that kind of thing: anthropological, but enthusiastic—no use of the verb *cling*. And, speaking of, a little stack of *The Audacity of Hope*.

So young people read. But more often than that, they watch TV, and their favorite show just now is The Show.

You all know The Host of The Show. Even if you never watch television, his book has been in every book-selling venue in America (it was also available at Junk of Asia). His glasses frame intent eyes, every black hair is in place. He is good-looking, with just-enough-too-much electricity to make him preposterous. Yet though he is a blowhard, he also has to be someone you want to invite into your living room every night. It is a tough persona to pull off; Jerry Lewis spazzing it up may provoke laughs, but is intolerable in large doses to anyone not raised on Racine. The Host has to be your favorite fool.

Is he ever. I thought I was a moderately productive, moderately useful citizen. Every day brought new work for my hands, and I did the work of my hands and was glad. My colleagues like me, my employers pay me. In serving my little platoon I helped keep the great army of the race stumbling along. But when I first went on The Show, I realized that I had been mistaken. I had been dust, ashes, nothing; only after my appearance did I begin to exist.

> I went from being a regular customer, a moderately good tipper, and a distant uncle-figure, to being an *uomo rispettato*, all because of The Show.

The Show tapes, as many shows do, on the far west side, where we store car dealerships and the carriages that serve Central Park. You know you are on a top-notch show from one look at the green room. The strawberries are fresh, the cheese came from a cow, there is milk for the coffee, not little pellets of creamer. By the standards of green rooms this is Lucullan. Another sign of something different is the guides who take you back and forth, and the producers who come out to brief you. Everyone is young, or younger than young. One producer told me she realized that once she passed 30, she became a graybeard. After a taping she wants to go home, while her younger colleagues want to go out and party. I nodded wisely. But all these people are pleasant. Many are the shows where the personnel have the personalities of hostages, or muggers. Good cheer flows from the top.

The audience has been primed by a comic before The Host goes on. When he makes his entrance, the yell that greets him is like knickers pelting Tom Jones. I sat in an on-deck area, behind a drop curtain on the edge of the stage, and thought, what am I getting into? Performing was like the recurring dream of being in a play whose script you have not seen. Yet Host, personnel, and crowd seemed to like it, and home I went.

Then I began to exist. My fishmonger upstate is a young man with a narrow-brimmed hat, earrings, and a beard. He's a great guy, and he gives good char. But when I came in the first time after the taping, his voice was warmer, the timbre richer: "You were on The Show."

It is not just the young. My good friend who runs the online program of a major university asked if I could get him and his companion tickets to be in the audience for The Show. I could have gotten him tickets for NATIONAL REVIEW's 50th-anniversary banquet; but he wanted to see The Show. So did another good friend, the marketing director for a 140-year-old resort. She would have come in from the hills if she could have gotten into The Show.

Waitresses and maîtresses d' of course treated me better. I went from being a regular customer, a moderately good tipper, and a distant uncle-figure, to being an *uomo rispettato*, all because of The Show. My wife benefited second hand. She was at a cocktail party for a friend, an award-winning poet, and discovered that the servants of muses were also fans of The Show.

When my lawyer told me he had seen me, I drew the line. Your lawyer is supposed to be yours, the man who argues my client was not there, and if he was he didn't shoot, and if he did it was in self-defense. He shouldn't give me extra *nachas* because I was on television, even on The Show. And he certainly shouldn't ask, "When will you be on again?" **NR**

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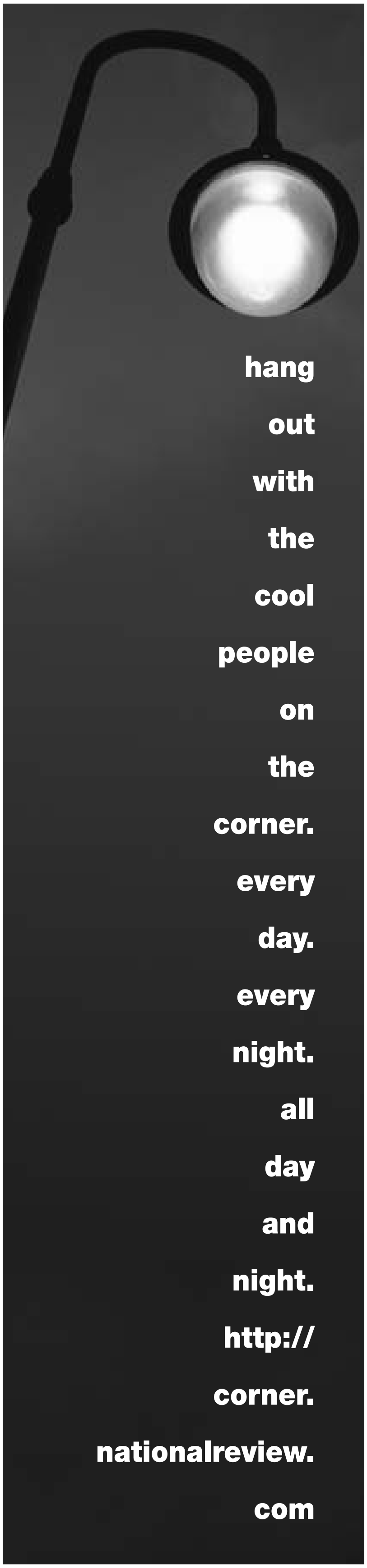


happy warrior

MARK STEYN

Crazy Crazy, All the Time

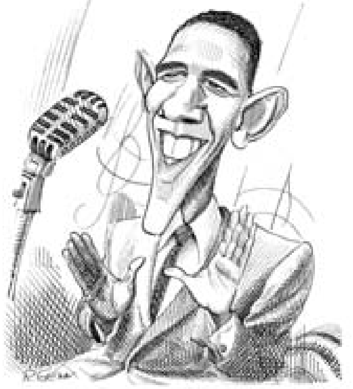
If you read a Barack Obama speech, you notice that, aside from the we-are-the-ones-we've-been-waiting-for narcissistic uplift and the Washington-needs-to-lift-people-up-not-tear-them-down bromides, almost everything he says is, well, nuts.

I don't mean the moments when he gets carried away and announces that his administration would "stop the import of all toys from China." As it happens, that's a policy I'm not unsympathetic to. Almost 80 percent of American toys are made in the People's Republic and, while that may well be appropriate given the whiff of totalitarian coerciveness that hangs around Barney the Dinosaur, I can't say I'm entirely comfortable with contracting out U.S. innocence to the butchers of Tiananmen. For one thing, come the Sino-American War, Beijing will have the ultimate fifth column inside the West: The nation's moppets, resentful at having their Elmos and SpongeBobs cut off for the duration, will be shinning down the drainpipe after dark in ski masks and blowing up power stations to hasten the day of liberation.

But forget that. Worse than the painting-by-numbers demagoguery are some of the accidental glimpses of the senator's worldview. For example: "The drug companies, they're not going to give up their profits easily when it comes to health care."

Well, gee, how unreasonable of them. But demanding they give up their profits "easily" comes easy to him. Until he wrote his recent bestseller, the concept of "profits" was entirely theoretical to Obama's life. As his wife put it, the Obamas "left corporate America, which is a lot of what we're asking young people to do. Don't go into corporate America." So Barack didn't. Instead, he became a "community organizer," whatever that is. It would make no difference to life in this great republic if every "community organizer" in the lower 48 were deposited on an atoll in the Antarctic. On the other hand, if America's drug companies were no longer profitable, it might make rather a lot of difference.

In print, Barack Obama comes as close as any major-party nominee ever has to sounding like the kookiest college Marxist. But, as I say, that's when you read his words. When you hear him, in that smooth baritone that would make "Would you like fries with that?" sound like change you can believe in, everything is terribly reasonable, moderate, evenly modulated.



ROMAN GENN

I was thinking of the Obama technique while watching his campaign's in-house pastor on TV. The senator had found himself obliged to plead that, alas, he'd chanced to be out of town for God Damn America Sunday, AIDS Conspiracy Sunday, and the America Had It Coming 9/11 Memorial Service, and defenders of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright had offered the reflexive response that his controversial remarks had been taken out of "context." So the reverend supplied the context. He went to the NAACP and the National Press Club, and CNN & Co. broadcast the speeches live under the bizarre misapprehension that this was doing their man Barack a favor. Wright did impressions of the Kennedys and demonstrated the differing styles of black and white marching bands, attributing these to genetic differences: Blacks are "right-brainers," whites are "left-brainers." Blacks have a vibrant oral tradition deriving from long-ago African tribesmen who were in effect the first hip-hoppers, while Mozart wrote down his symphonies on manuscript paper, which is all very well but, let's face it, the powdered-wig set have no sense of rhythm.

I paraphrase, but not much. Underpinning every utterance of Reverend Wright was the assumption that these features are hardwired into us and no amount of culture or education can undo them. Presumably no amount of government money or employment quotas can undo them either, although the reverend didn't go that far. Had a white man gone on national TV and given the speeches Wright gave, he'd be finished in public life, and so would any man who'd been dumb enough to spend 20 years in his company, get married by him, and entrust his kids' religious upbringing to the guy.

As it happens, honky culture is also rich in oral tradition—Homer, for example, not to mention medieval nursery rhymes still known to every kid in the early 21st century. Of course, the white man then figured the big bucks were in writing things down and hiring a lawyer to enforce your copyright. But the idea that black artists are conditioned by their "oral tradition" to half-baked hoodlum exhibitionism barked out over a pneumatic backing track would have struck, say, Scott Joplin as absurd. Duke Ellington has more in common with Ravel than with Snoop Dogg.

But the best refutation of Wright's thesis is his protégé. Were Obama carrying on in his pastor's vernacular tradition, he'd be at single digits. I think the senator's shaping up to be a tragic figure—a man born free of the bitterness of the black experience who by choice immersed himself in the toxic pool of Jeremiah Wright's neo-segregationism. When Obama's mask slips and he makes his throwaway observations about health-care profits, you glimpse the narrowness of the world in which he's spent his adult life. But political candidacies are about the music more than the lyrics. And when he opens his mouth to sing, Obama's baritone is reassuring and mellifluous, and the accompaniment beautifully orchestrated. Tonally, he's the Nat King Cole of political candidates—which suggests he at least knows the limitations of Jeremiah Wright's wacky race theories on vernacular authenticity. **NR**

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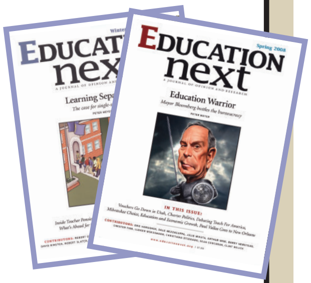

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—William G. Howell and Martin R. West

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Terry

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